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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the phenomenon of underrepresentation of blacks in advanced level secondary school courses in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Initial interviews revealed that the problem of racial imbalance in advanced level courses was not one of identifying black gifted youth or of offering attractive programs for them, but of black children choosing not to take demanding advanced course work. A comprehensive literature review and surveys among teachers, students, school personnel, parents, and residents in the Shaker Heights school district and in other school districts provided information on perceptions of the major problems in the advanced placement system, yielded suggestions for improving the system, and examined the factors thought to influence student selection of courses and curriculum. Among the variables identified as influential in black students' course selection were teacher, parent, counselor, and peer influence, student motivation, school success and failure, and lack of information about options. Exploration of educational interventions to correct racial imbalance in high level course enrollments provided several options for support and development programs, and indicated the need for a strong commitment to educational intervention strategies on the part of the local school board. (Author/MJL)

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RESEARCH ON SELECTION METHODS AND PROGRAMMING FOR ADVANCED BLACK STUDENTS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

FINAL REPORT TO THE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM OF RESEARCH GRANTS ON DESEGREGATION
GRANT NO. NIE-G-80-0189

SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
15600 Parkland Drive
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120
SEPTEMBER, 1981

Jack P. Taylor, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

UD 022 204

RESEARCH ON SELECTION METHODS AND PROGRAMMING FOR ADVANCED BLACK STUDENTS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

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SEPTEMBER, 1981

FINAL REPORT: NIE PROGRAMS OF RESEARCH GRANTS ON DESEGREGATION
GRANT NO. NIE-G-80-0189

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PREFACE

The work of this project represents one part of a vast amount of continued research and practice that has been attempted by many to attack the national problem of school desegregation.

This project has as its focus one small part of the issue. However, that part deals with what many would consider to be the long term solution to many of the school desegregation and housing isolation problems that face our country. That is, the project deals with fostering leadership and a high degree of academic attainment among black children in the United States secondary schools. Parenthetically, it is important to note that this study dealt only with black children and not other minorities. It is the opinion of the researchers that similar situations might apply for many other minority groups.

If, in the long run, we are to have a just and integrated society, we must do all in our means to share the power of commerce and government. This can best be done by sharing knowledge and assuring academic success for all students. But also concomitant with this goal is fostering of talent -- in this case determing why a disproportionately low number of black children enroll in advance placement and honors courses at the high school level. If, in our country, we allow this situation to continue, we will be faced with too few black leaders and role models, thus more racial tension and additional promotion of the caste system.

The Shaker Heights City School District has been involved in voluntary integration activities since 1970; and the effort continues today. It is because of the commitment to quality integrated education of the community, Board of Education and Superintendent that this project was initiated. In all honesty, some of the results are what we would have expected, but, through this research effort, they certainly have been brought into sharper focus . Like so many endeavors of this type, this study has lead to more questions and other avenues of inquiry. I am truly indebted to Dr. James Sanders and his staff for the many hours of work they have invested in this study. The work is theirs, not mine, and I thank them graciously for their help.

Mark Freeman
Shaker Heights, Ohio

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FORWARD

This report is the final report for a project supported by the National Institute of Education under Grant NIE-G-80-0189 awarded to the Shaker Heights City School District. The grant proposal grew out of an analysis of high school course enrollment data in the Shaker Heights, Ohio, City School District wherein it was found that a disproportionate number of black students were enrolled in low level, remedial courses and an imbalance of white students were enrolled in high level, honors and advanced placement courses. The question asked was why such an imbalance exists when course enrollment is open to the level of a course a parent or student chooses.

Our initial analysis of the question led us to believe that there may be factors identifiable from the research literature that would explain why certain levels of courses were being differentially selected by many black and many white students. We also believed that the question was not unique to Shaker Heights and that a survey of school districts with large black student populations would give us some guidance about programs that had been successfully tried by other school districts to change the enrollment patterns of black students in honors and advanced placement courses. Finally, we believed that the research literature and experiences of other school districts would lead us to model programs that could be tried in Shaker Heights for black students wanting to move into advanced courses.

In subsequent communications with the National Institute of Education, we proposed collecting data on the factors that different types of people would use in choosing the most appropriate level of a course for a minority student. Moreover, we proposed looking at school characteristics for those schools that have successfully enrolled balanced proportions of white and black students in advanced courses and for those schools that have not been successful. We also proposed looking at access, program, and outcome characteristics of programs where a racial balance in advanced courses was attained. Finally, we proposed looking at home, school and social variables associated with SES, by race, to see if race and social class could be split apart when considering interventions that would improve racial balance in advanced course levels.

We met each of our goals with varying degrees of success. The literature is rich with suggestions about causes of differential advanced course enrollments by race and with descriptions of programs or interventions that may improve racial balance in advanced course level enrollments. Our surveys of "successful" school districts and school districts with large black student populations provided only marginal results, due usually to problems that we had in gaining cooperation and to the fact that we could find no "successful" school districts. Our interviews with different types of people, especially with students, about factors that affect course level selections, where productive. Our analysis of SES and race were indeterminate due to the confounding that we found in Shaker Heights of race with social class for black students who enrolled in remedial and advanced courses.

We have gained considerable insight into the original question during this year of research and are deeply indebted to the National Institute of Education for its support of our efforts. We now have a clearer direction for our continued research effort aimed toward changing the racial balance of enrollments in advanced course levels.

The details of our research and our findings related to future investigations are found on the pages that follow.

I. INTRODUCTION

The reality of underrepresentation of blacks in advanced level courses is a de facto segregation problem faced by many public school districts. The research reported in this document represents one step toward finding solutions to the problem.

For purposes of this study, a levels system in a high school involves the offering of courses at different levels of difficulty. In Shaker Heights, Ohio, the course levels in the high school are numbered and labeled as follows:

Level 5 - Advanced Placement
Level 4 - Honors
Level 3 - College Prearatory
Level 2 - Remedial

The school district has about a 40% black student population and has about 85% of its graduates going on to college. Level 2 courses are reported to be less demanding than the college preparatory courses and level 4 and 5 courses often require many hours of homework and paper preparations. In addition, level 4 and 5 courses often get into content areas that are beyond most high school curricula. Teachers report that those who want to persevere can do the work in level 4 and 5 courses, but these courses are demanding.

Data compiled by the Shaker Heights City School District serve as a case to illustrate disproportional enrollments of black secondary students in high level courses, where enrollment is an open choice for parents and students. During two years (1977-78, 1978-79), tallies of black and white enrollments in high level courses and in the progressively more difficult courses in the high school show a significant trend in the lowering by grade level of the number and ratio of black students enrolled. Proportionate enrollments occur in the early junior high grade levels, but change to disproportionate under-enrollment of black children beginning in later junior high grade levels and accelerating into the high school grade levels (OCR Reports, 1978 & 1979). The proportion of the total high school student population that is black is approximately 40%. Illustrative enrollments by content area in the high school have been approximately as follows:

Course	% of students who are black
English	38%
Mathematics	36%
Vocational	78%
Social Studies	39%

Enrollments in Level 5 (honors) courses in high school have appeared as follows:

Course	% of students who are black
English	20%
Mathematics	5%
History	14%

At the same time, enrollments in the lower level (Level 2) courses in the high school are as follows:

Course	% of students who are black
English	80%
Mathematics	76%
Social Studies	68%

The problem of underrepresentation of blacks in higher level secondary courses was the focus of this investigation. It is a general problem that faces school districts other than Shaker Heights. It is also a problem where little research has been carried out. More recent data over a four year period provide further evidence of a racial imbalance in course level enrollments:

	1977 37% Min. 63% Non-Min.		
	Total pop.	Min.	Non-Min.
Level 2	1178	73%	27%
Level 3	6513	39%	61%
Level 4	682	15%	85%
Level 5	552	8%	92%

	1978 39.3% Min. 60.7% Non-Min.		
	Total pop.	Min.	Non-Min.
Level 2	868	76%	24%
Level 3	6712	41%	59%
Level 4	933	19%	81%
Level 5	449	15%	85%

	1979 39.2% Min. 60.8% Non-Min.		
	Total pop.	Min.	Non-Min.
Level 2	590	75%	25%
Level 3	6588	44%	56%
Level 4	1038	17%	83%
Level 5	424	13%	87%

1980 41.4% Min. 58.6% Non-Min.

	Total pop.	Min.	Non-Min.
Level 2	539	76%	24%
Level 3	6582	43%	57%
Level 4	963	19%	81%
Level 5	525	14%	86%

The research questions that grew out of the enrollment data reports were:

1. Why does the racial imbalance exist by course levels when course enrollment is open to the level of a course a parent or student chooses?

2. What enrollment methods will provide fair access for black students to high level secondary courses?

3. What methods can be used to remove the racial imbalance of students signing up for advanced secondary courses?

We present our findings in the following sections of this report:

Section II	Perceptions of the levels system
Section III	Guidance from other school districts
Section IV	Guidance from students and student records

These first four sections are followed by a discussion of the results of this project in Section V.

II. PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEVELS SYSTEM

We believed that it was important to conduct early in this project an independent assessment of the issues that might be addressed in a study of black student enrollment in the Shaker Heights High School levels system. Thus, the project staff arranged for a site visit on October 8-10, 1980 by three researchers detached from the school system: Drs. James Sanders, Daniel Stufflebeam, and Charles Warfield from Western Michigan University. The procedure for the three-day site visit included interviews with school district personnel, parents and other taxpayers, and students. A copy of the interview questions is provided in Appendix A.

A summary of issues raised during the interviews is provided in Table 1. The concerns that were raised about the fairness of the levels system were categorized as curriculum concerns, instructional concerns, advising concerns, problems with facilities and support services, and communications issues. The interviews served to focus the attention of the researchers on a narrow set of issues within which answers to the original research questions might be found.

Interviewees also were encouraged to share their concerns about any aspect of the instructional program in the District so that the levels system might be seen in context. Student and teacher interviewees were volunteers who responded to an invitation from the District administration to participate in interviews. Residents who were interviewed were people who responded to an invitation to all Shaker Heights residents from the District Superintendent to participate in interviews, or to respond to a questionnaire about the levels system. Since there were many more residents who volunteered for the interviews than could be interviewed, nine residents were randomly chosen from the volunteer list in each of the District's elementary school-resident attendance areas. The resulting list of interviewees was not a representative sample of all residents in the Shaker Heights District.

TABLE 1

A SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED DURING OCTOBER 8-10, 1980
INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, STUDENTS,
AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1. Curricular Needs

-- Are all segments of the student population being well served?

-- Should early intervention for low achievers be initiated?

-- Should more support services, special resources or auxiliary materials be developed? If so, what? Individualized development of student aptitudes?

-- Personalizing instruction to needs of individual students?

-- Can and do teachers tailor instruction for aptitudes of every child?

2. Instruction

-- What practices and systematic efforts exist and are needed to prepare and motivate students to move into higher levels?

-- Are black students "locked into" lower level classes? If so, what can be done to change this?

-- Teacher rewards - is excellent teaching rewarded more in higher levels than lower levels (recognition of outstanding achievement) - are outstanding teachers found teaching all levels?

-- Does a poorer educational climate exist in lower levels? More discipline problems? Lower quality of teaching?

-- How do levels differ? (contact, level of difficulty, student workload)

-- Stigma, no modeling by higher students in level 2? Degree of isolation?

TABLE 1 (continued)

3. Advising

-- Are counselors and teachers steering blacks into lower level classes?

-- Are black parents as aware as white parents of options available to them?

-- Are there barriers to getting access to advanced levels?

-- Is stronger guidance needed?

-- Are there instances of institutional racism that need to be eradicated?

4. Facilities and Support Services

-- Is there a need for a computer system for maintaining individual student records to monitor development and aid in advising? What information should go into such a system? Who would maintain it? Use it? What equipment is needed? Is such a system viable?

5. Communications

-- Are parents, students counselors and teachers informed about their options, sequences of courses needed to complete certain programs, content of courses at different levels, how are levels switched, and criteria needed to enroll in a certain level of a course?

-- When do parents and students (and should) they be informed?

-- How do parents and students (and should they) become informed? What do they need to know?

In addition to the site visit interviews, two surveys were conducted early in the project by the District staff. The first was conducted in late September, 1980 and the second in late October, 1980. In the first survey, a questionnaire was sent to all junior and senior high school teachers and students in the Shaker Heights City School District. The questionnaire contained two questions:

1. In your view, what is it about the levels system that is working well?
2. In your view, what is it about the levels system that needs to be improved?

A summary of problems with the levels system and suggestions for improving it is provided in Table 2.

In the second survey, a questionnaire was sent to all Shaker Heights residents who volunteered initially either to be interviewed or to respond to a questionnaire. The first part of this questionnaire contained the following three open-ended questions:

1. In your view, what are the strengths of the "Levels System"?
2. In your view, what are the weaknesses of the "Levels System"?
3. What changes, if any, would you recommend with respect to the "Levels System"?

The second part contained 98 statements about the levels system and related issues that were compiled by the early October site visit team from their interview notes. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each statement, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Of the 1500 questionnaires mailed by the District, 686 useable, completed questionnaires were returned. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix B.

TABLE 2

PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEVELS SYSTEM
JR. AND SR. HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER
AND STUDENT SURVEY, 1980

1. Jr. High School Teacher Survey 1980 - Problems
   a. The expectation level for Level 2 student performance is low and, as a result, the student product is low.
   b. Communications to parents need to be improved.
   c. Students are not challenged in Level 2 courses.
   d. Misplacement of able students into Level 2 courses.
   e. Inflexigility in scheduling limits curriculum choices for both students and staff
   f. Level 2 students are often unmotivated due to self-image, peer pressure, teacher expectations, and parent expectations.
   g. 7th and 8th grade science needs a remedial level, according to failure lists.

2. High School Teachers Survey, 1980 - Problems
   a. Many Level 2 students are capable of working in higher level courses.
   b. There is an expectation on the part of students that Level 2 courses cover more basic material and that there should be less work.
   c. Workable bridges for students to move up levels are often non-existent.
   d. Except for teachers, intellectual models are missing in Level 2
   e. Weighting of grades is a problem in the system.
   f. Level 2 is seen as the problem kids - which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A stigma is attached to thosee who are below the Shaker average.

3. Jr. High Student Survey, 1980 - Problems
   a. Level 2 is too easy.
   b. Level 2 students become isolated.
   c. It is very hard to move up levels after the school year has begun.
   d. Level 2 students are graduating too easily and it is unfair to them.
   e. Students in Level 2 are made to feel less adequate than those in higher levels.
   f. Some students take Level 2 only to be with their friends.

TABLE 2 (continued)

4. High School Student Survey, 1980 - Problems
   a. Many people take Level 2 courses just to have an easier course.
   b. Teachers and counselors are too impulsive about suggesting a student to switch to a lower level class just because of poor or below average performance.
   c. The good teachers are assigned to the high and low levels, and not to the middle levels.
   d. No one knows who should be in what level.
   e. Once put in Level 2, it is hard to get out of it.
   f. Teachers have terrible attitudes toward students who are below average. The treat them like dummies.
   g. Grade-weighting is unfair.

5. Jr. High School Teachers Survey, 1980 - Suggestions
   a. Every teacher should be given a mandate to encourage their students to achieve their best by going into the highest level where they can be challenged and meet success at the same time.
   b. Use past teachers as the best predictors of success for a student at a given level. They usually have the best information.
   c. Enroll all Level 2 teachers in the E.O.C. inservice program.
   d. Eliminate Level 2 algebra and have those students go into either algebra I - Level 3 or pre-algebra.
   e. Use a prerequisite system to curtail the ability of parents or students to choose any class they wish. A prerequisite system could consist of several factors -- diagnostic test, prognosis test, previous achievement scores, teacher recommendations..
   f. Elementary students need more one-on-one attention in order to grasp basics. Levels of competencies need to be established.

6. High School Teachers Survey, 1980 - Suggestions
   a. Make scheduling easier. For example, do not limit Level 4 French to juniors and seniors and offer it as many times a year, with as many sections, as the demand calls for.
   b. Improve course descriptions that differentiate by objectives and content and use separate titles for different level courses.
   c. Do not "stick" teachers with teaching a particular level. Match teaching talents and successes with the most appropriate level.

TABLE 2 (continued)

d. Vigorous recruiting of students into higher levels, beginning with grade 1.
e. Increased efforts to aid all students, parents, and teachers to understand the meaning of the system, and how it relates to individual growth.
f. Reserve Level 2 for only those students who do not have adequate basic skills to function at a higher level, and teach them basic skills.
g. Require all Level students to master this core curriculum material in order to pass, not just a 70% performance level.

7. Jr. High School Student Survey, 1980 - Suggestions
a. More information about the level of a course is needed. It is hard to imagine what a level of a course will be like.
b. The levels in 8th grade math needed to be redefined. There should be an option for a course harder than elementary math, yet easier than algebra I.
c. Students signing up for pre-algebra and English Level 2 at the junior high should be tested because sometimes they do not belong there.
d. More select and precise placement of students into Level 2 is needed.

8. High School Student Survey, 1980 - Suggestions
a. Level 2 should not be recommended for anyone who is capable of doing higher level work.
b. Teachers need to keep in touch about what is being covered across schools at different levels.
c. Make Level 2 class sizes smaller.
d. Set up prerequisites for entering courses at each level.
e. Create subunits of students within courses to deal with differences in ability.
f. Students should be given a better idea of what they are getting into when they sign up for a level of a course.
g. Teachers should work with students in Level 2 classes to prepare them to move up to Level 3.
h. Counselors should encourage each student to take higher levels.

A summary of major problems in the levels system and suggestions for improving it that came out of the community survey is provided in Table 3.

One of the major findings of this phase of the research project was that conceptually, the levels system may be viewed as one part of the much larger instructional program in the Shaker Heights City School District. Viewed as a form of curriculum organization offered primarily in the high school, the levels system was developed to meet academic needs of high school students. Its objectives were to provide a level of instruction in courses that was both appropriate and challenging for the students being served by the District. Free access to courses was intended for students, and most students enroll in different levels of different courses. Every spring, students, with the advice of counselors, teachers, and parents, if they choose, select courses at the levels that they want for the next school year. Parents must sign the course registration sheet.

Information about courses is made available to students through a course selection guide provided to them by the District. The intended result of this selection process is the selection by students of courses at the levels that suit their preparation, ability, and their plans for post-secondary endeavors. The interviews and surveys raised serious questions about whether the ideal was actually happening.

As one part of the curriculum, and indeed one part of the total instructional program, the levels system could not be analyzed in isolation. Its design and presence affects other parts of the curriculum and instructional program, and other parts of the curriculum and instructional program affect it. Moreover, the levels system not only affects, and is affected by, the high school population of the District, but it also affects, and is affected by other groups in the school system and the community. Thus, we chose to analyze the levels system in the context of a larger conceptual framework when we looked at the issue of minority student enrollments in advanced course levels.

TABLE 3

PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEVELS SYSTEM
COMMUNITY SURVEY, 1980

1. Community Survey, 1980 - Problems
   a. Parents are not well informed about what leveled courses are or how they differ.
   b. Level 2 students get locked into that level.
   c. Label given to Level 2 courses - they are for "dummies" - self-fulfilling prophecy: teachers do not challenge the class, students are made to feel inferior.
   d. Level 2 limits the chance to meet people of differing learning abilities.
   e. Large class sizes in Level 2
   f. Level 2 parovides an easy "out" for unmotivated students.
   g. Discipline problems in Level 2 classes.
   h. Students coming to Shaker from other school systems are not all prepared to function in the Shaker system without assistance.
   i. Counselors are over burdened with paper work, limiting their time for counseling low achievers and discipline problems.
   j. Low standards are set for assignments and grading in Level 2.

2. Community Survey, 1980 - Suggestions
   a. A program of academic motivation for all students in the early elementary grades.
   b. Expanding enrichment or advanced offerings in the elementary grades so that more students can participate.
   c. Teaching all students how to learn in the elementary grades.
   d. Early identification of low achievers and conscious one-on-one instruction with those who are identified.
   e. A program of all parent involvement in achieving specific educational goals for their child beginning in kindergarten.
   f. A monitoring system whereby weaknesses in the system are detected early and corrected.
   g. Verbal, not written, communication among student, counselor, teacher, and parent before a course level is selected.
   h. Encourage students to "audit" advanced levels for a short time.
   i. Frequent dissemination of factual information about levels and instructional opportunities.
   j. Limit the number of Level 2 and Level 4, 5 courses a student can take at any one time.
   k. Reduce class sizes in Level 2.

l. Eliminate weighted grading.
m. Inservice education to sensitize all teachers and counselors to racial issues.
n. Make it relatively difficult to sign up for any Level 2 course.
o. Improve the testing program and use of test results for diagnosis and instruction.
p. Institute research on the effects of all programs and services.
q. Improve communication among teaching and counseling staff; between elementary, junior, and senior high schools.
r. Set up monitoring system for racial discrimination.
s. Make Level 2 remedial and entrance into it only by assignment -- not a voluntary option.

Specifically, concerns that caught our attention at the beginning of this project were as follows:

1. Curriculum. We heard claims in the interviews we conducted that the student population in the District is changing and that a system set up many years ago is not adequate to meet the needs of current and future students who are being served. References were made to students who have recently moved into the District from Cleveland and other areas. Questions were raised about whether incoming students were adequately prepared to perform well in Shaker courses. Individuals questioned whether the post-secondary plan of the current population were still almost exclusively college attendance. Suggestions were made that intervention in the primary or elementary grades is needed for students who are not performing well from the beginning of their school years. Moreover, there were some people who questioned whether instruction given to students was tailored to the development of their special aptitudes, especially in early grades when it is not too late to begin educational development.

On the other hand, a number of people argued that the current curriculum offerings are serving all students equally well. Some claimed that the levels system is responsive to the range of student needs that currently exist in the District. Others noted that there are still about 80% of the graduates attending college and that they have a history of success in higher education. People also noted that support services are available for students who are not achieving well in school and special resources and auxiliary materials are available to develop programs to build on individual student aptitudes. Whether these resources and supports are adequate of every individual student were questions that remained to be clarified. There were also questions about whether teachers, at all grade levels, have the skills to determine special aptitudes for each student and build instruction systematically to the best advantage of the student. Even if they do, some questioned whether there is a procedure for transmitting information about students from one grade level to the next and for building a personalized program for students in grades K-12.

2. Instruction. In the interviews, no specific practices or systematic efforts to prepare and motivate students to move into higher level courses were identified. It was claimed that black students get "locked into" lower level courses across grades.

Another issue pertaining to instruction dealt with whether or not students enrolled in lower level courses are being deprived of some benefits of being in class with higher achieving students. In some interviews, individuals questioned whether isolating students of different achievement levels was a pedagogically sound policy since lower achievers are deprived of the motivation provided by competition or modeling by higher achieving students.

3. Advising. When asked why a racial imbalance exists in higher level courses, respondents said that counselors and teachers steer black students into lower level courses, that access to higher level courses and movement into higher level courses is different for black and white students, that once students enroll in Level 2, the system keeps them there, and that black parents and students are not as aware of the options available to them as are white parents and students. On the other hand, others said that the imbalance is due to different levels of achievement and is justifiable given the (black) student's (lack of) preparation for higher level courses.

4. Communications. Many people who were interviewed and who responded to questionnaires said that they were uninformed about course options available to students, sequences of courses that should be selected in order to complete certain programs, the content of courses at different levels and how course content differs by level, how one goes about switching levels of course, or what criteria one should meet to enroll in a certain level for a course. These people were parents, students, counselors, and teachers.

The District does provide information about course selection to students and parents and there is a handbook for parents. The question remains, however, when parents should begin learning about course offerings and what the best method of communication to parents, students, counselors, and teachers is.

Thus, in this first phase of the research project, a good sense of possible causes of low black student enrollment in higher level courses. in Shaker Heights was gained. In subsequent phases of this project, an attempt was made to sort out those possible causes that have support from those that could not be confirmed.

A considerable amount of time was spent analyzing published literature after the completion of the initial interviews and surveys. Factors that were found pertinent to student selection of courses and curricula (programs) and which confirmed perceptions that were held by a good many people are listed in Table 4. Upon completion of the literature searches, we then went outside of Shaker Heights to collect data from other school districts.

TABLE 4

FACTORS THOUGHT TO INFLUENCE STUDENT SELECTION
OF COURSES AND CURRICULUM
TAKEN FROM PUBLISHED LITERATURE

I. Family - Environment
   a. economic - low income, etc. (Johnson, 1970; Pounds & Bryner, 1973; Toby, 1969)
   b. socialization - authoritarian vs. permissive ...(Katovsky, 1964)
   c. value system - education worthless (except to possibly find a job)(Conant, 1958; Billingsly, 1968; Rosen, 1969)

II. Achievement - Motivation
   a. high aspirations, low expectations (Katz, 1978)
   b. low job market (Byers, 1961; Ogbu, 1978; Lefkowitz, 1972)
   c. stigmas (Thomas, 1965; Ogbu, 1978)
   d. low SES students - don't internalize gratification (Berkowitz, 1964; Davis, 1944)

III. School
   a. teachers/administration/counselors (Kohl, 1968; Castenada, 1974)
      1. "self-fulfilling prophecy"(Thomas, 1965; Rosenthal/Jacobson, 1968; Gottlieb, 1964)
      2. low grades (Silberman, 1970)
      3. students perceptions of teachers, etc. (Ryans, 1961; Silberman, 1970)
      4. tracking - helps upper level students, stigmatizes lower level students (Ogbu, 1978; Orfield, 1975)
      5. Teacher biases (Deutsch, 1964; Toby, 1961)
   b. IQ/achievement tests discriminate against low SES students (Marland, 1971; Torrance, 1968; Rossi, 1961)
   c. textbooks discriminate against minority students (Johnson, 1970; Hall, 1970)

IV. Peer Group
achievement, etc. viewed negatively by students (Parsons, 1961; Torrance, 1979; Coleman, 1961).

III. GUIDANCE FROM OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

There were two external surveys conducted as part of this project in order to gather information from school districts with relatively large black student populations. The first survey was sent to "lighthouse" districts for Shaker Heights -- school districts with whom Shaker Heights identified because of similarities in student population and school district demographics. There were 19 such districts which were contacted and the list of districts is provided in Appendix C. A copy of the letter questionnaire that was sent to these districts is also included in Appendix C.

An annotated report of the results of this first survey is provided in Appendix D. Our findings were that many of these "lighthouse" districts were facing a problem similar to the one faced by Shaker Heights and that there were no new or effective solutions that could be shared. In fact, we concluded that Shaker Heights is at the forefront of these districts in providing new and sensitive support services to encourage black students to take high level courses in the high school. Many of the programs and services being offered by Shaker Heights were the best attempts we could find to remedy the racial imbalance found in high level course enrollments. For this reason, we felt it was important to compile and describe the efforts already underway at Shaker Heights to encourage black student participation in high level courses. This compilation is provided in Appendix E.

The second survey was conducted in the spring of 1981 and was based on information that we had already collected. We selected randomly a sample of 60 high school buildings throughout the country where black student enrollment was between 30 and 70%. The sample was selected from the Directory of Elementary and Secondary School Districts, and Schools in Selected School Districts: School Year 1978-1979, published by the U.S. Department of Education. A list of the selected school districts and a copy of the questionnaire that was sent is provided in Appendix F.

Our findings from the second survey were disappointing. After two follow-up letters, we had fewer than 20 useable responses. At that point we decided to telephone each of the remaining schools. The telephone calls proved to be equally frustrating. People were out of the office, neglected to return telephone calls, and directed us to sometimes three or four other people in order to get answers to our questions. Many respondents were guarded in their responses, fearing (we assumed) some form of retribution for deficiencies in their school system. In the end, useable data were obtained for 36 schools. The responses were as follows:

Q. In answer to the question, do you have advanced placement courses at the high school level? 29 of the 36 schools surveyed, said yes, 7 said no.

Q. Do you have remedial courses at the high school level? 33 said yes, 3 said no.

Q. Are advanced placement or remedial courses elective? 23 said yes, 6 said no; 1 said that remedial courses were not elective; 7 said yes for advanced placement/no for remedial.

Q. Procedures that are used for placing students in courses? Of the 36 schools surveyed, 33 said that teacher recommendation was important; 29 mentioned counselor recommendations; 22 used self-selection; & 7 used parental pressure. Most felt that the word "pressure" was the wrong word. They preferred participation or input. Peer group pressure was mentioned by 5 schools.

Other methods of placement mentioned were the Stanford Achievement test. A student had to be in the 90th percentile for advanced placement courses; 5 mentioned the use of standardized test scores and past academic performance. GPA ability grouping miscellaneous procedures: reading level district staffing.

Q. Are minority student enrollments in both the advanced placement and remedial courses proportionate to your total school enrollment? Of the schools surveyed, 13 said yes, 20 said no.

When questioned on percentages in the advanced placement courses, all schools reported anywhere from 70-95 % of the advanced placement courses are taken by white students and anywhere from 30 to less percentage taken by black students. And in the remedial courses, all schools reported 30-55 % attendance by white students and anywhere from 45% on up for attendance of black students.

Q. In your opinion, what are the causes of low minority enrollment in advanced placement courses in this country when it happens? 7 said intelligence; 27 economic status; 25 family background; 12 teacher perception of student; 13 student perception of teacher; 32 lack of student motivation; 32 peer pressure; 1 environment; 1 pre-elementary formative years.

Q. Do you feel that minority student enrollment in advanced placement courses is a problem in your district? 2, no response; 18, yes; 16 no.

Q. Has it been a problem in the past? 15, yes; 19, no.

Q. Do you foresee this as continuing to be a concern? 20, yes; 10, no; 6, no response.

Reasons for no answers: problems will solve themselves over the years as more and more minorities make it into and out of higher levels, they were doing what they could to improve the quality of students that entered into the school by insisting that children go to kindergarten, emphasis on black enrollment for the jobs and colleges would continue to put pressure on school systems to provide quality

students. Reasons for yes answers: resources are not tapped enough to turn the problem around at home or at school, more so in the next four (Reagan Administration) years because there will be no economics to motivate school systems to deal with the problem, lack of funding programs to support student achievement, disproportionate number of minority teachers, no effort from community, staff does not see problem.

Q. What approaches have been taken in your district to increase minority student enrollment in advanced courses? competency development program in which students were given a vocational certificate; remediation is not the answer; alternative curriculum that excludes academics avoids the problem of disproportionate enrollments.

a strong public relations program, (advanced placement courses were published in the newspaper); school issues two diplomas (1 with minimum requirements, this has gotten student attention and has motivated students to want to achieve); eliminate social promotion; have career fairs at each school level; increase amount of involvement with counselors; phone low attendees in all level courses.

Q. Could other methods be recommended to make advanced placement courses more accessible to minority students? no way, cannot be patterned that tough tests should be administered to bring up standards and get students ready, that the problem will change with time, that parent involvement, study habits and attitudes toward work at home have to be changed; exposure to advanced placement courses would give students a chance to become familiar with them; have famous minority leaders come and motivate students.

Q. Was there a mandate in the district to address the problem of low minority enrollments? 6 yes; 24 no; 2 no response.

Q. Are there any support systems in your districts specifically designed to discourage minority students from dropping out of advanced placement courses? 7 yes; 17 no. What kind of support systems are offered? 7 regular contact with parents; 9 outside tutoring; 10 regular counseling sessions, minimum time limits spent enrolled in courses.

Q. Do you know of any other districts which are faced with the problem of disproportionately low minority enrollments in advanced placement courses and disproportionately high minority enrollment in remedial courses? 7 yes; 23 no; 1 thought it was the same all across the country; 1 mentioned Houston Independent School District in Houston, Indiana (List from questionnaire).

Q. Do you know of any individuals or school districts which have successfully dealt with the problem of low minority enrollment in advanced placement courses or disproportionately high minority enrollments in remedial courses? 1 yes, 29 no. The yes answer was the entire state of South Carolina because of their strong public relations unit throughout the state. Alabama was also mentioned.

Q 9. What approaches have been taken in your district to increase minority student enrollment in advanced courses? acceleration at the jr high level, calculated to raise the level of expectation in the more formative years; none to date; gifted program, students recruited by test score; can't answer; increased counseling, community meeting with lay people; teacher inservice conducted by staff development and human relations department; recruitment by principal or counselor; none; publicity through PTA, written bulletins, PA announcements; allow open enrollment, with control on performance; summer workshops for teachers and counselors; lots of encouragement; magnet schools in

elementary and middle school levels, resource people from colleges invited for inservice; teacher recruitment from 9th grade; no plan, hope that minority students will develop interest in same manner that majority student would.

Q 10 Can you recommend other methods to make advanced placement courses more accessible to minority students? We offer no advanced placement courses; counseling; no; teachers should motivate instead of griping; cooperative involvement of counselors and teachers; need programs at elementary schools; publicity; test results; curriculum is done by scheduling; sessions for minority students separate; increase sensitivity to worth of minority students; use minority students already in advanced placement courses to help; Amsterdam News (media that minorities read); none; if they can do the work fine; counselors pre-select minority students; use college students to help; recruit at elementary and middle schools; early recognition; intensive program for parents; amount of work is often a deterrent; minority instructors in advanced placement courses.

As can be seen from these responses, the racial imbalance in high and low level courses is a pervasive phenomenon and it continues to be a concern in high schools with relatively large black student populations. Many actions being taken to change the imbalance may be seen as cosmetic and there does not appear to be a strong commitment or mandate from school boards to take corrective actions. There were a number of ideas shared in questions 9 and 10 that may be worth consideration, but our conclusion was that these were just ideas and few had been put to the test. The need remains for school districts to select strategies that have high potential, to develop and implement them, and to evaluate the results. In our opinion, only by direct, concentrated effort with a commitment from the Superintendent and School Board, can effective steps be taken to change the racial imbalance by class level.

IV. GUIDANCE FROM STUDENTS AND STUDENT RECORDS

In April, 1981, when Shaker Heights students were enrolling for 1981-82 courses, researchers from this project conducted personal interviews with 51 Shaker Heights High School students. The interview contained questions about factors which we had concluded influenced a student's selection of level of a course. A copy of the interview questionnaire may be found in Appendix E. The student sample was a judgement sample identified by high school staff, based on quotas of certain student characteristics that the researchers wanted in the sample. Of the students interviewed, 30 were black and 21 were white, 24 were female and 27 were male, 4 were in ninth grade, 19 in tenth grade, 22 in eleventh grade, and 6 in twelfth grade. Based on father's occupation, 30 were low SES and 17 were high. GPA's were distributed fairly uniformly from top to bottom with 16 students under 2.0 and 13 over 3.0. About 90% planned to go to college.

When asked why they chose each course that they did for the upcoming year, the reasons given, in order of frequency, were:

--- challenging (usually about 30%)
--- college preparation (usually about 14%)
--- required (usually about 12%)
--- continuation of a sequence (usually about 12%)
--- counselor recommendation (usually about 4%)

When asked who most influenced their decisions to take a course, the responses in order of frequency, were:

--- myself (usually about 25%)
--- counselor (usually about 20%)
--- teacher (usually about 10%)
--- parent (usually about 8%)
--- friends (usually about 6%)
--- siblings (usually about 4%)

When asked whether each of the following influenced their decision, the responses were:

Influence	N: yes	%	N no	%
1. parent advice	38	74.5	13	25.5
2. what sibling had taken	14	27.5	36	70.6
3. preparing for after high school	47	92.2	4	7.8
4. want the best possible education	45	88.2	6	11.8
5. teacher's advice	26	52.0	25	49.0
6. don't think you could do well in high level courses	21	41.2	29	56.9
7. want to be with friends	8	15.7	43	84.3
8. counselor's advice	36	70.6	15	29.4
9. want easy courses	10	19.6	41	80.4
10. didn't have any choice	16	31.4	35	68.6
11. haven't taken prerequisites for other courses	16	31.4	35	68.6
12. not interested in other courses	18	35.3	33	64.7
13. didn't know what else to take	13	25.5	38	74.5
14. wanted to get certain teachers	15	29.4	35	68.6

15. don't want to spend a lot of time on home-work	11	21.6	40	78.4
16. teachers don't think I can do well in school	8	15.7	43	84.3
17. counselor doesn't think I can do well in school	5	9.8	45	88.2
18. concern over what other students think	9	17.6	42	82.4
19. didn't think about my selections that much	9	17.6	42	82.4
20. wanted to avoid certain teachers	9	17.6	42	82.4

When asked about what there was about the Shaker Heights system that caused them to end up in the courses that they were taking, responces included:

--- big selection (7)
--- lower levels are easier (5)
--- bad teachers (4)
--- prerequisites (4)
--- good counselors (4)
--- no choice (2)
--- pressure in high levels (2)
--- bad counselors (1)
--- courses not offered (1)
--- stay with friends (1)

When asked about what, over all their years in school, had influenced their placement in courses now and next year, responce included:

--- helpful teachers and counselors (15)
--- past courses (11)
--- family (10)
--- what they wanted was available (6)
--- teachers and counselors not being helpful (3)
--- friends (3)

--- general atmosphere (2)
--- easy courses (1)
--- structured vocational courses (1)

When asked about whether there were other things we should know about the system in Shaker Heights, responses included:

--- it is a good system (11)
--- I have more confidence in lower levels (5)
--- the lower levels are for dummies (3)
--- counselors are not helpful (3)
--- teachers are not helpful (3)
--- it is hard to move up levels (2)
--- it is a hard system (2)
--- students make the decisions about course selection (2)
--- course descriptions need to be changed (2)
--- minorities cause problems (2)

At the time of the interviews, project staff also pulled about 200 individual course selection sheets for 10th grade students in order to review comments written on them by counselors. Whenever a comment was recorded, it was coded as either supportive or non-supportive. Student names were then given to the District Central Office and each student was coded as a black or white student.

These data were then analyzed to determine whether there was a correlation between race of student and nature of counselor's written comments. The tabulation was as follows:

	Supportive	Nonsupportive	TOTAL
Black	14	14	28
White	30	13	43
TOTAL	44	27	71

The phi correlation coefficient was .13, indicating no significant correlation existing in these data between race and nature of comment.

Our findings from these student interviews indicated to us that there are many reasons why students do not sign up for high level courses and there are many reasons why they do. The decision is an individual one and is a function of the student's life history. We could see no patterns or broad generalizations that would lead us to attribute the

racial imbalance to one or a few causes. Each of the factors listed on the student interview questionnaire is a potential influence on course level selection. This does not imply, however, that schools cannot engineer programs to develop more black scholars. What it does suggest is that the engineers must have an intimate knowledge of the individuals who are being promoted into high level courses so that programs may be tailored to fit their needs.

We did look at the low achieving students in Shaker Heights by race and SES to see if SES variables could be separated. We found almost all the lower achieving students in the high school were black, and almost all are children of blue collar workers. An indication of parents occupation for the lowest achieving students may be found in Table 5. We did not feel that it would be productive to further analyze student data on SES due to the high correlations between race and SES and the homogeneous student characteristics (race, SES) found in low and high level courses.

TABLE 5
PARENTS' OCCUPATIONS FOR LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation
Teacher	Accounting
Engineer	Bookkeeper
Professor	Homemaker
Owner - Print Company	
Shopper - Ford	Medical Records Tech
V.P. Trust Company	Not employed
No indication - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	
Child Support Referee	
Principal	Teacher
	Housewife
Construction - Mason	Homemaker
Machine Operator - Ford	Chipper
General Highway Express	Asst. Manager/
	Hair Stylist
Orthopedic Surgeon	Executive Asst.
Fisher/Fazio	Assembly - Ford
No indication - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	
	Cook
	Post Office
Plant Operator	Housewife
No indication - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	
Mailman	MCA Office
Special Equipment Operator	
Retired	Housewife
Hyda Press Operator	RN - VA Hospital
Housekeeping Consultant	Vocational Counselor
Welder - TRW	
Self-employed/Bar Owner	Asst. Credit Mgr.
deceased	Inspector TRW
	Whitman Co.(aunt)
	Whitman Co.(aunt)
Owner	Secretary
Audobon	
Owner	Nurse
Foreman/Roofing	Housewife
Owner	Quality Manager
Physician	
District Mgr./Ohio Bell	Social Worker
Electrician/Welder	Senior Dir./Ohio Bell
Mailman	Data Transcriber Supervisor
Laid off	Homemaker
Principal	Asst. Principal
Doctor/Anesthesiologist	Home, former nurse
	Clerk/CSU
Accountant	
Owner	Social Worker
Producer in advertising	Law Consultant

TABLE 5 (continued)

Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation
Fire Investigator	RN
Assembly/Ford	Labor/Bd. of Ed.
Truck Driver	Housewife
Unemployed	
Sr. VP/Bank	Professor
Asst. Principal	Airline Reservation Clerk
	Clerk/Post Office
Truck Driver	Secretary/part-time
Stockbroker	Freelance Artist
No indication -	
Carpenter	Housewife
Republic Steel	Bus Driver
V.P. Marketing	Clerk/City Hall
Unemployed	Homemaker
Owns Catering Business	Homemaker
Owner	Homemaker
Owner	Foreman/Ford
Business Manager	
Gen. Manager/Cleveland Contractors	
Vice President	

V. DISCUSSION

At the beginning of this project, we viewed the evidence of a racial imbalance in advanced levels of courses as a selection and program development problem. We found from the initial site visit by external consultants (and later confirmed by the teacher, student, and community surveys) that the problem is not one of identifying black gifted and talented youth or offering attractive programs for them. Instead, it was a problem of black children not choosing to take demanding advanced course work when it is offered. "Choosing" may not adequately describe the phenomena. Present were factors such as conscious and unconscious discrimination by peers, teachers, and counselors, as well as lack of information about how to make the school system work for the student.

We found that there were a number of variables that operate in a school system to shape the course selections of black students. Such variables include:

--- teacher influence (conscious & unconscious)
--- counselor influence (conscious & unconscious)
--- parent influence
--- student motivation ("academic" ethic)
--- peer influence
--- early school successes & failures (that are not remediated)
--- awe of the school system (not knowing about options or rights)
--- early history of skill development

We perceived the racial imbalance problem as one of natural selection which may be changed by educationally sound interventions. We then went about the task of searching for grounded interventions that were likely to change the racial imbalance in high level course enrollments. Our surveys to school systems yielded some important ideas that should be seriously considered. Our analysis of support services and resources offered by Shaker Heights yielded other interventions that are developing a history of impact. The fact is, however, that few school districts have the commitment or mandate from their school board or superintendent that will give impetus to this form of school improvement. Until such a commitment is made, we believe that changes in the racial imbalance of enrollments in high level courses will not be forthcoming. Students and school personnel develop

histories of school practices and educational "habits". Historical data such as those collected at Shaker Heights show the racial make-up of high level course enrollments that will continue until a program of development of black scholars is developed.

The programming methods that appear to hold potential for moving black students into higher level courses include:

--- teacher and counselor inservice to communicate awareness of the problem and motivational, support and instructional techniques that will help push the able black child into higher level courses.
--- establishment of a support group for advanced black students; peer group support.
--- orientation programs for black students that highlight services and resources available to them and their student rights.
--- guidance department policies aimed at placing the student in the highest level possible, without racial bias.
--- hand scheduling able students into groups of highly sympathetic teachers.
--- keeping track of names of high achieving students through elementary and junior high school so that they receive continued encouragement toward high academic achievement.
--- putting selected students with teachers with skills necessary to work with special needs of advancing black students.
--- orientation meetings for parents of students targeted for advanced courses.
--- a computerized tracking system for all students in the school district.
--- an advanced course program beginning in elementary school with racial quotas for enrollment. This is intended to bridge accelerated development from elementary school to junior high school to senior high school in English and mathematics.

The literature also provides guidance for strategies that have potential in changing the racial imbalance in advanced course enrollments. Suggestions from the literature that we have found to be worth noting are provided in Appendix H.

Returning to the three research questions that guided this project from its beginning, we have found the following answers to those questions:

1. Why does the racial imbalance exist by course levels when course enrollment is open to the level of a course a parent or student chooses?

   We found that a number of factors influence course level selection and that the decision to select a specific course level is highly personal. It is not simply a function of ability as some would think. Instead, it is a matter of motivation in some cases, unawareness or lack of guidance in some, a matter of "habit" in families that do not produce scholars in some, significant events in family or school or people in some, and in some cases peer influence. Schools have not taken a strong stand to commit themselves to changing the racial imbalance or even to make people aware of it. The imbalance will undoubtedly continue until an intervention occurs from the school board or superintendent.

2. What enrollment methods will provide fair access for black students to high level secondary courses?

   As we previously noted, fair access requires a firm commitment or mandate from the school board or superintendent and then a targeted plan which is carefully monitored during its implementation. There are too many reasons for staying below the advanced levels for black students to advance naturally.

3. What methods can be used to remove the racial imbalance of students signing up for advanced secondary courses?

   A number of promising methods were discovered through this project and listed in this report. The effectiveness of each method remains to be studied, however.

Programming methods used to reduce the racial imbalance in advanced courses are new and relatively untried. School districts are only now beginning to attend to the problem of unbalanced enrollments by level. With continued research and experience with alternative programming methods, new knowledge about effective intervention strategies should be forthcoming.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX A
Interview Questions

All:

1. Are there any problems with the levels system?
2. Any changes you would make in the levels system? Why?
3. What evidence is there that the levels system works? Doesn't work?
4. Why is the levels system an issue? What are the arguments on both sides of the issue? What evidence is there to support each argument?
5. Is there any reason to believe that the needs of all students are not being met? What evidence is there of this?
5. Why don't black students enroll in Level 5?

School Staff:

1. Contrast the levels. What would happen if level 2 were removed?
2. 20% of graduates do not go to college. What are the black/white percentages of this group? Where do they go?
3. Describe the placement process. When do black or white students become isolated or do they?
4. What is the distribution of time in the district for level 2 students? for level 4 students? for level 5?
5. To what extent do students take different levels in different courses?
6. To what extent do students move out of one level into another?
7. What is the system by which students choose the level they want to be in? Where does parent involvement come in?
8. What do you think of grade weighting? Do students in lower track get A's?

Community Members:

1. Have you tried to move your child across levels? Any barriers?
2. When you participate in school activities, what do you give up? What would you give up if you were to participate?
3. Have you had any problems with the Shaker School System?

Interview Questions (Continued)

Students:

1. What level are you in? How did you come to choose this level? Are you satisfied with your placement?

2. How long have you been in the Shaker Heights School System?

3. What do you plan to do when you graduate?

10-8-80
nbg

APPENDIX C

NAMES AND ADDRESSES

APPENDIX C

Brookline Public Schools
Brookline, Massachusetts

Weston Public Schools
89 Wellesley Street
Weston, Massachusetts 02193

Tenafly Public Schools
27 West Clinton Avenue
Tenafly, New Jersey 07090

Westfield Public Schools
305 Elm Street
Westfield, New Jersey 07090

Great Neck Public Schools
Union Free School District #7
345 Lakeville Road
Great Neck, New York 10020

Manhasset Public Schools
Memorial Place
Manhasset, New York 11030

Chappaqua Public Schools
650 King Street
Chappaqua, New York 10514

Williamsville Central Schools
Georgetown Square
5225 Sheridan Drive
Williamsville, New York 14221

Mamaroneck Union Free
School District #1
740 West Post Road
Mamaroneck, New York 10538

Radnor Township Schools
South Wayne Avenue
Wayne, Pennsylvania 19003

Lower Merion School District
301 Montgomery Avenue
Ardmore, Pennsylvania 19003

Lake Forest Community
High School District #115
1285 N. McKinley Road
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

Lake Forest Elementary Schools
95 West Deerpath
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

Birmingham Public Schools
Chester & Martin Streets
Birmingham, Michigan 48012

Oakwood City School District
20 Rubicon Road
Dayton, Ohio 45409

Shorewood School District #4
1701 E. Capitol Drive
Shorewood, Wisconsin 53211

Edina Public Schools
Independent School
District No. 273
4660 W. 77th Street
Edina, Minnesota 55435

SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

15600 Parkland Drive
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120
(216) 921-1400

JACK P. TAYLOR
Superintendent

GUY M. SCONZO
Director

October 8, 1980

Dr. Karl Plath, Superintendent
Administrative Office
Highland Park High School Dist. No. 113
1040 Park Avenue West
Highland Park, IL 60035

Dear Dr. Plath:

The Board of Education and Administration of the Shaker Heights City School District are currently reviewing our use of weighted grades and course levels as they relate to our educational offerings. Specifically, we are very much interested in considering new ways in which our levels system in particular can be improved and strengthened to meet the needs of our student population.

To this end, we are seeking to learn as much as possible about those school systems nationally which share in the fortune of being considered lighthouse educational systems. We would greatly appreciate your, or one of your staff members, taking the time to share with us any information which you have covering the following questions:

... Does your educational system use any form of leveling ability grouping or tracking as part of your instructional strategy?

IF YES: What is the system and how do you facilitate student access, teacher in-service, public awareness, etc.?

IF NO: Why not?

... Does your secondary education division use any form of grade weighting practice?

IF YES: What is it and why is it used?

IF NO: Why not?

... In your levels, ability grouping, or tracking system, what means have you established to assure student mobility within and among the abilities groups or tracks?

... Have you established any specific support programs (i.e., teacher in-service, student assistance, etc.) which are aimed at the need for encouraging and preparing students to enroll and succeed in higher levels, abilities groups or tracks?

IF YES: What are those programs?

Additionally, we would very much appreciate your supplying us with such demographic data about your school system as total enrollment, percentage of minority students, student-teacher ratio, as well as anything else you may think would be useful information.

We have taken the liberty of sending you, under separate cover, information about the Shaker Heights School District relative to the very questions we are asking of you. While the information you can supply us will be a tremendous help to our review, we believe that information sharing is a two-way street.

Thank you in advance for your invaluable time and cooperation. If we can ever be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to call on us.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Kindest personal regards.

Very sincerely yours,

Guy M. Sconzo

GMS:HN

Guy M. Sconzo, Ph.D.
Administrative Assistant
to the Superintendent

APPENDIX D

SURVEY CONDUCTED AT SHAKER HEIGHTS

APPENDIX D

Group I

SURVEY CONDUCTED AT SHAKER HEIGHTS

COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL, New Jersey -- Enrollment: 2261; Minority students: 11.8%; Student-teacher ratio: 13.4 - 1.

Most courses have a minimum of 4 levels. These levels are weighted in rank. The higher the level, the better the rank. Counselors and staff may move students from one level to another at any time. The only incentive for achievement that is necessary is the class ranking.

EVANSTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL, Evanston, Illinois -- Minority students: 35%.

Academic department (Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Languages) has 4 ability levels. These levels are open: a parent or student may request placement in any of the levels without faculty recommendation. There is a weighted grading system -- in AP courses, an A = 5; in Honors courses, an A = 4.5, and in low and regular courses, an A = 4. Peer-pressure is very great. Attempts at giving students support has not worked will in the past, but efforts are continuing in that direction.

GREATNECK SCHOOLS, New York -- Enrollment: 1200; Minority students: 15%; student-teacher ratio: 14-1.

Each subject area has ability groups. If counselor, teacher and department head concur, a student can be moved from one group to another. There is no weighting of grades.

INDIAN HILLS, Cincinnati, Ohio -- Enrollment: 996; Student-teacher ratio: 20 - 1.

Four criteria utilized in ability grouping: teacher recommendation, demonstration of mastery, scores on achievement tests, and demonstrated ability. In AP courses an A = 5, etc. Teacher recommendations are used to advise students of what group they should be in.

SCARSDALE, New York -- Students are grouped by ability in each subject. A student could be in Honors Math, and in remedial English. There is no weighting of grades. There is considerable mobility among the ability groups. There are no support systems, but none seem necessary.

WEBSTER GROVES, Missouri -- Enrollment: 1490; Minority students: 17%; Student-teacher ratio: 16 - 1.

Courses such as algebra, chemistry, biology have two levels: A & B. Honors and AP courses are offered in other courses. An H is given when a teacher feels that a student has done outstanding work. Students move easily from one to another level. There are no specific support systems.

NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL, North Grove, Illinois -- Enrollment: 4918.

Ability grouping is practices in most subjects. There is also weighted grading. In 8th grade, students take a series of aptitude/achievement tests. With these results, class records, teacher evaluation and a personal interview, a student is placed in different levels in different subjects. Parents and students can ask for level changes - if to a higher level, at any time -- if to a lower level, only ar registration time.

OAK PARK, Oak Park, Michigan -- Enrollment: 4000; Minority students: 45%; student-teacher ratio: 23 - 1.

Generally, the courses are not leveled. However, there are optional courses which are of varied difficulty. Counselors advise students on what course they are best suited for, but the student is free to choose whichever course they want. There is no grade weighting. Teacher in-services are offered to help understanding of cultural backgrounds of students.

ST. LOUIS PARK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, St. Louis Park, Minnesota -- Enrollment: 1998.

Ability groups are used in the areas of language, math, science, and social studies. College prep courses are offered in these areas. There is no weighting of grades. Fall, 1980 saw the establishment of a support group for gifted/talented students.

LEXINGTON, Lexington, Massachusetts -- Enrollment: 6093; Minority students: 7-8%; Student-teacher ratio: 16 - 1.

The high school leveling system is a 6 point system, with 0 indicating an unleveled course, and 5 indicating the highest level of difficulty. There is no grade weighting. High school students are free to choose any level course they wish, if the prerequisite has been completed.

MANSFIELD, Storrs, Connecticut -- Enrollment: 1200.

There is no leveling or ability grouping nor weighted grading. Teacher in-services are held to deal with such issues as encouraging students to improve their performance.

MT. LEBANON HIGH SCHOOL, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania -- Enrollment: 2721.

There are phased courses, as well as advanced placement. Extracurricular activities are also available. In AP courses, an A = 5, B = 4, C = 2.

Columbia High School. School district of South Orange and Maple Wood, New Jersey.

Total Enrollment - 2261
% Minority - 11.8%
Student to Teacher Ratio - 1 to 13.4

Q. 1 Our educational system does use a form of leveling, ability grouping, or tracking as part of our instructional strategy. Most academic subjects have a minimum of four levels of groupings where every enrollment permits division. Course numbers indicate the level of each section. Students may select courses, but their placement in the level of the course is the prerogative of the school or personnel. Staff members make recommendations to guidance counselors regarding course level for each student in the following year. The practice of the guidance department is to place the student in the highest possible section each year, and if he can not succeed at that level, move him to a lower level during the school year.

Q. 2 Columbia High School has a weighted class rank. The level of the section in the grade constitutes the basis for class rank. Class rank is used only as a predictor of possible college success. There is no honor roll, honor society, or honors at graduation at Columbia High School. In discussions with college admissions personnel, the information perceived by this school district's personnel indicates that our weighted class rank is much fairer and more accurate for the purpose for which it is used.

Q. 3 Staff members and counselors may move the student to the appropriate level at any time during the school year. By starting the student at the highest possible level each year, it is possible to move easily to a lower section, if necessary.

Q. 4 Class rank alone provides the necessary encouragement to students to enroll and succeed in higher level groups.

Evanston Township High School. Located in Evanston, Illinois.

% Minority - 35%

Q. 1 We have four ability levels in our academic department (Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Foreign Languages), role ability, regular, honors, and advanced placement. We do not have ability grouping in our elective departments or in physical education. We have had this system for as long as anyone can remember, so have little problems with public awareness. Since we are a desegregated system and approximately 35% of our students are black, we have maintained an 'open tract' system--that is, a parent or student may request placement in any ability group without faculty recommendation. We have found that that rarely happens.

Q. 2 We have a grade weighting system but only at the upper end of the tracking system. In determining class rank, we use the following system:

Low ability and Regular	Honors	Advanced Placement
A = 4 points	4.5	5.0
B = 3 "	3.5	4.0
C = 2 "	2.5	3.0
D - 1 "	1.5	2.0

It is used because we believe that a student should be able to earn an A at any ability level. Without grade weighting, our teachers had given the students of lower ability only D's and failing grades, with an occasional C thrown in. Conversely, students in upper levels should also earn C's and D's if they deserve them. Since a C in an honors class often indicates the same or a superior level of achievement as does an A at a lower level, a grade weighting system seems to make sense.

Q. 3 Since peer-pressure against achieving blacks in our schools is fierce, we have attempted to group black students in honors classes so that they can receive peer support. This has not worked very well in the past because we haven't done it very well. We have randomly plunked 6 or 7 black students into honors classes and expected them to make it. We are currently working on a plan in which we will: (1) get names of high achieving black from junior high principals, (2) hand schedule groups of these students into groups of highly sympathetic teachers, (3) try to form a support group for achieving black students outside the classroom.

This last is something that is at this point still a dream in our eyes instead of a fully formulated program.

Greatneck Public Schools

Location: Greatneck, New York
Total Enrollment - 1200
% Minority Students - 15%
Student Teacher Ratio - 1 to 14

Students come from diversified socio-economic backgrounds. Some live in homes worth several hundreds of thousands of dollars, and others are on welfare.

Q. 1 We have a course offering booklet, orientation meetings, parent meetings, visits by guidance counselors to classes before registration period begins, and discussion by classroom teachers.

Q. 2 No, the superintendent is not in agreement with the proposal to weight honors courses.

Q. 3 There are ability groups in each subject area. They act independently of each other. Students need not be in a previous grade honors section to apply or be admitted. Students are counseled out when teacher, department head, and guidance counselor concur.

Q. 4 Are there any support programs? No.

Indian Hills Exempted Village Schools. Located in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Total Enrollment - 996
Student to teacher ratio - 20 to 1

Q. 1 In answer to your first question about the system of criteria used, there are four criteria used in ability grouping at the middle school and senior high school levels. These four are as follows:

Teacher recommendation, demonstration of mastery of district-wide development basic skills, staggering scores on achievement tests, and demonstrated ability through grade point average.

These are new criteria and our public has not been totally informed about this system.

Q. 2 In reply to the second question concerning grade weighting practice, we do use grade weighting in our advanced placement foreign language, English, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics courses at the High School level. An A is 5 points, a B is 4 points, etc., instead of the traditional 4 point system.

Q. 3 Your third question asks about student mobility within our ability groups. In response to this I will briefly indicate that the first ten weeks of each school year is a critical period in which individual teachers can contact parents and students to advise them of any recommended change, up or down, in ability groups.

Q. 4 In reply to your last question concerning support programs or counseling of students into higher levels, I should answer this by indicating that our guidance department works very closely with teachers, parents and students in verifying the proper placement of students in appropriate classes.

Scarsdale Public Schools. Located Scarsdale, New York.

Q. 1 We do have a system of ability grouping. Essentially, students are grouped by subject matter into two or three ability levels--remedial, mainstreamed, and honors. Grouping varies from subject to subject--i.e., a student in honors English may be in remedial math. The system is presented to students and parents in a variety of ways--individual conferences with counselors, group meetings with school administrators and counselors, classroom discussion by teachers, a written course of study. Students only enter the remedial or honors groups on recommendation of the teachers. However, if a parent is insistent, we shall often give a student a chance.

Q. 2 We do not weight grades when we rank our students. Honors courses are equal to others in quantifying student grades. We do not weight grades because we think our school is competitive enough. If an honors course is weighted more heavily than a regular course, then we fear that our students would feel even more pressure to be in honors courses. In addition, we believe that a logical extension of the practice of weighting honors grades more heavily than other grades is to weight remedial grades less heavily than others. This practice would increase the stigma of these students.

Q. 3 With no objective evidence, I confidently say that there is considerable mobility of students among the higher ability groups. Perhaps because our population is reasonably homogeneous to begin with, students move with regularity from one group to another, depending on their level of performance and their motivation.

Q. 4 We do not have specific support programs to encourage students to seek greater challenges academically. On the other hand, we do not seem to need them. Again, the community remains highly competitive. Both students and parents share a sense of the value of academic achievement. Students are highly motivated.

Webster Groves High School. Located in Webster Groves, Missouri.

Total Enrollment - 1490
% Minority - 17%
Teacher-student ratio - 1 to 16

Q. 1 In basic courses such as algebra, chemistry, biology, etc., courses are offered at two levels, A and B. The A courses emphasize theory while B courses take a practical, hands-on approach to the subject.

Students are advised by counselors and instructors as to an appropriate level for them to take, however, final decision is made by the student and his/her parents.

Honors and AP courses are available to the students in American History, English, American Studies, Math, and Science. For the most part, the curriculum in these courses is at college freshman level.

Q. 2 The only type of weighting is a bonus grade-point which is indicated by an H grade when a teacher feels that a student's work is of a distinctively superior nature and that the work completed is over and above that which students ordinarily do to receive an A grade. When awarding an H grade the teacher and at least one other department member (usually the department Chairperson) must concur that the work is of H rate quality. No other weighting is done.

Q. 3 In most courses A and B levels are scheduled in parallel so that students can easily be moved from one level to the other. The majority of changes are from the A level to the B level.

Q. 4 No, there are no specific support programs available.

New Trier High School West. Located in North Grove, Illinois.

New Trier High School district consists of two four year high schools with a total enrollment of 4918 students.

New Trier High School has for many years practiced ability grouping in most of its subject offerings. The assumptions underlying this practice are: first, that students learn better when they are in classes designed for them, and, second, that teachers can design courses to meet the particular needs of students when students are grouped according to ability.

The ability level of a particular course is reflected in the third digit classification following the subject name. An explanation of each digit follows:

5--Subjects offered at the 5 level are advanced courses offering college level work. 5 level courses are offered only in the senior year. Seniors are selected for 5 level courses from 4 level courses upon the approval of the department chairman.

4--Subjects offered at the 4 level are exam courses for able students. Subjects are studied in greater depth and frequently at a faster pace than at other levels.

3--Courses offered at the 3 level are designed for students who can be expected to do good work in subjects moderately paced and of moderate difficulty.

2--Courses offered at the 2 level are designed for students who can work best at a slower pace and who need particular help in the development of specific skills.

1--Courses offered at the 1 level are for students who have experienced considerable difficulty in the subject and who can benefit from special attention and a specially designed curriculum.

9--Courses offered with a 9 designation are unleveled and may be taken by all students, although those who have experienced difficulty in academic work should consult with the department chairman before enrolling.

8--All minor subjects are designated 8. Minors are not computed in students' class rank.

Q. 2 New Trier assigns different values to grades achieved at different ability levels for determining the student's rank in class. Since ability levels at which courses are taken do not appear on his transcript, weighted averages reflect the nature and difficulty of the work required on the different ability levels. Since an A achieved at another, the weighted average helps colleges to distinguish between the degrees of achievement attained by New Trier students.

Q. 3 Dealing with student mobility: In their eighth grade year, students who plan on entering New Trier take an extensive series of aptitude and achievement tests. The results of these tests, the student's 8th grade records, the advisors or homeroom teachers evaluation, and a personal interview by the freshmen advisory panel in determining the initial placement of students in ability groups. It is not at all unusual for a student to find himself in different ability levels in different subjects.

New Trier makes every effort to place students in the ability group in which they can best learn. It is of course natural for students, parents, and advisors to want to present the most attractive transcript possible to colleges. Students and parents seriously disagreeing with a particular course placement may, after consultation with the appropriate instructional and student services personnel, initiate a request for a change of level by filling out and signing a form. Parental and student request for placement in a higher level not recommended by school personnel may be made at the time of registration or during the course of the semester. Parental and student requests for placement in a lower level than that recommended by student school personnel, may be made, however, only at the time of registration.

Oak Park School District. Oak Park, Michigan.

The Oak Park School district has an enrollment slightly below 4000, with a black population of about 45%. We are receiving an increasing number of foreign-born students, mainly Chaldean. Nearly 10% of student population is foreign-born. Student-teacher ratio is approximately 23 to 1.

Q. 1 Generally, the answer to this question is No. However, there are optional courses of varied difficulty in both middle school and high school. Students are counseled regarding courses best suited to their achievement levels and interests, but if they or their parents choose these other courses, they are free to pursue them.

Some years ago, we did have tracts and found that they tended to keep students stratified with practically no mobility. The tract led to labelling of students by teachers and by other students.

Q. 2 No, all courses have equal weight in computing honor point average. We have discovered no compelling reason for weighting. Students are encouraged to take the courses which will be of greatest value to them and not to choose them on the basis of anticipated marks.

Q. 3 As stated above, we have no tracked program or any system of assigning students on stratified basis. We do offer multiple electives in high school and middle school and students are counseled to elect those courses to be consistent with their personal goals and with a level of difficulty with which they can be successful. However, students are offered choices which they may exercise during each orientation period.

Q. 4 Inservice activities are conducted for staff to assist them in learning more about the learning and cultural backgrounds of their students. The inservice activities have emphasized how to work with the difference in entry and achievement levels of their students. All secondary teachers have received training as teachers of reading and writing.

Students are offered remedial help in basic skills if they are deficient in any of the language arts, communications skills, or mathematics.

St. Louis Park Senior High School. Located in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

Total enrollment - Sr. High 1998, including 44 hearing impaired.

Q. 1 St. Louis Park Schools do have ability groups in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. College prep courses are offered in these areas.

Q. 2 St. Louis Park does not use any form of grade weighting practice. This decision was made by the faculty.

Q. 3 Students may move within and among groups as needs and abilities are evaluated.

Q. 4 A support group for the gifted/talented students was established in the Fall of 1980 by the Council of the Gifted.

Lexington Public Schools. Located Lexington, Massachusetts.

Total enrollment - 6093.
% Minority students - 7 to 8%.
Student-teacher ratio - 1 to 16.

Q. 1 With respect to ability grouping and leveling we have several systems operating.

A. At the junior high school, generally three levels exist in math, foreign language, social studies, science and English, with the exception of 7th grade social studies, science and English which are grouped heterogeneously. The decision to modify grouping practices in the three 7th grade subjects was made after considerable study and discussion. I am including a study of junior high instructional grouping practices which contain a good deal of information on these practices in the junior high school. In order to assist teachers with instruction in heterogeneous classes we have organized a number of in-service programs. We have also held a number of orientation sessions for parents and organized a speaker series on the developmental needs of early adolescents.

B. At the high school, courses are designed according to level of difficulty from 0 to 5, 0 indicating an unleveled course and 5 indicating the highest level of difficulty.

Q. 2 We do not use any weighting of grades. Instead we introduced last year a temporary record which contains information relative to students performance in every course in the distribution of grades within that course.

Q. 3 With respect to mobility, at the junior high level teachers monitor student progress and are able to recommend changes in level. In addition, parents and students may make formal requests. At the high school, students are free to elect courses of any level of difficulty assuming they have, in some cases, completed the necessary prerequisites.

Q. 4 With respect to in-service programs to encourage success in higher levels, we have tried through a number of programs to put teachers with skills necessary to diagnose student capability and interests more precisely and to respond to these. Our reasoning is that with the appropriate instructional approach, matched either to the students learning style or to his diagnosed cognitive abilities, he could achieve more and experience greater success.

Mansfield Public Schools. Located Storrs, Connecticut.

Total enrollment - just under 1200 students.
% Minority - very low. Those who are there tend to have parents employed by the university at professional levels.

Mansfield Public Schools serves the community as a Kindergarten through 8th grade. They do not have a high school system.

Q. 1 The Mansfield Public Schools do not use any form of level, ability grouping, or tracking, except with the course itself such as Latin at the 7th and 8th grade level tends to attract students of higher ability. Our reason for not using the tracking system is based on the view that a heterogeneous group allows above average students in ability to continue to achieve at a rate appropriate to their potential and intends to enhance the performance of below average ability students. We believe that the responsibility to improve the performance of below average ability students is of great significance and yet remains one of the most difficult tasks in education. In my opinion the most singularly important method available is heterogeneous grouping. I am also confident that above average students will, during the course of the day, be attracted to one another in ways which provide adequate stimulation and growth.

We do not use any form of grade weighting. We believe that the most frequent use of such information pertains to the needs of colleges and universities as they attempt to select their incoming clients. It is my opinion that forced titles of an advanced nature, along with test date, provides sufficient information for that purpose.

Q. 3 Regarding the third question, since we do not use ability grouping or tracking, we are not concerned about mobility issues within groups or tracks.

Q. 4 We do offer teacher inservice programs which deal with the issues of encouraging students to improve their performance. There is nothing particularly unique about these programs aside from the fact they are basically teacher-designed and teacher-administered.

Mt. Lebanon High School

Location, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania

Total enrollment, high school grades 9 - 12 = 2721

At the senior high school the basic education program for students is realized with phased courses in various subject areas, as well as advanced placement courses in English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Foreigh languages and special opportunities in the areas of interdisciplinary fine arts and practical arts. Opportunities for exceptional students are also available through extracurricular activities sponsored by the school district and through independent studies, community learning projects and various forms of differentiated assignments.

Class rank is determined at the end of each semester in grades 11 and 12 by ranking the students in order according to quality point average. The student having the highest quality point average is number one in the class. The quality point average used for determining class rank is based on all semester grades and is earned in classes that meet four days per week, starting with the first semester of the 9th grade. Quality points are assigned to grades earned in all regular subjects that meet four days per week as follows:

A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, E = 0, N = 0

Pass/fail courses are not computed in the computation of class rank.

The only deviation from these values occurs in grades earned in the final or terminal year of advanced placement courses where quality points are earned as follows:

A = 5, B = 4, C = 2

(If a student falls below A or B quality work in an advanced placement course, he/she may be asked to transfer to a regular course in the same subject, at the teachers discretion). D = 1, E = 0, N = 0.

Group 2--Survey Conducted by Evaluation Center

Birmingham Public Schools
Birmingham, Michigan
Enrollment--9,427
Minority Students--2%
Student-teacher ratio--25:1

Ability grouping is used throughout K - 12 program. At secondary level, tracking is most commonly used in language, math and science. Grades are weighted.

Tenafly High School
Tenafly, New Jersey
Enrollment--1,043

There are honors courses and A.P. courses (level 1), courses of average difficulty (level 2), and remedial courses (level 3). Weighted grading is utilized. Level 1--A=5, B=4, etc. Level 2--A=4.5, etc. Level 3--A=4, etc.

Great Neck Public Schools
Great Neck, New York

There are honors and AP courses at this system. However, there are no weighted grades.

Manhasset Junior-Senior High School
Manhasset, New York
Enrollment--1225 (grades 7 - 12);
Minority Students--10%
107 Teachers, counselors, and administrators

Math, science and foreign languages have accelerated groupings at the secondary level. There is no weighting of grades.

Lower Merion School District
Ardmore, Pennsylvania
Enrollment--6799
Minority Students--6%
Student-teacher ratio--20:1

In the middle school, students are grouped two ways: either by advanced courses, or within 1 course there is differentiated instruction. At the high schools there are levels 5, 4, 3, and 2 as well as regular and honors courses. Weighted grades are used, but do not hold a great deal of importance.

Lake Forest School District (Elementary)
Lake Forest, Illinois
Enrollment--1535
Minority Students--1-2%
Student-teacher ratio--14.3:1

Weighted grading is not used. Ability grouping starts in 5th grade. 5th/6th grade--low, average, high, and gifted for math and English. In grades 7/8 there are also tracks for French and Spanish. Science has high, average and low tracks.

Lake Forest (High School)
Lake Forest, Illinois
Enrollment--1614

Advanced placement, honors, regular, basic courses are offered. Students may be enrolled in an honors course in one area and a basic course in another area, etc. GPA figures on a 5-point scale. AP and honors courses weighted an additional .5.

Radner High School
Radner, Pennsylvania

Advanced placement and honors courses are offered at the high school. Students in these courses have weighted grades--A=5, etc. Regular courses are graded on the A=4, etc. basis.

Horace Greeley High School
Chappaqua, New York
Enrollment--1268
Student/teacher ratio--14:1

AP courses--English, math, science, foreign languages, history. There is no weighting of grades.

Brookline Public Schools
Brookline, Massachusetts
8 schools, K - 8
1 highschool, 2137 students in 9 - 12
207 Asian Students and 175 Black students in Grades 9 - 12

This school district has a levels system where the levels are: Advanced Placement, Honors, Standard, Basic. Weighted grading is only done for Advanced Placement courses where A=5.0, B+=4.0, B=3.0. Placement into a level for a course is done through an elaborate and personalized counseling process for each individual student.

Brookline Public Schools
Brookline, Massachusetts

This school district had a tracking system at one time that started in first grade, but it was abandoned when they found that higher ability students wanted out of their track by junior high school so that they could be in classes with their friends. Now Brookline has a levels system where the levels are:

Advanced Placement

Honors

Standard

Basic

There is no weighted grading except for advanced placement courses where an A=5.0, B+=4.0, B=3.0. Students in Advanced Placement are required to take a qualifying examination to get into the course and a national college placement exam (Educational Testing Service) at the end of the course to get college credit.

The placement of students into particular levels of courses is accomplished through an elaborate and highly personal counseling system. The records of each student are reviewed by a counselor (there are 13 counselors in the high school for 2137 students), an administrative team, the department chairman for each course, and the teacher for each course. Their collective judgment determines the placement of the student in each course. Every student is watched using a computer system by the administrative team. If a change in course level is requested by anyone, statements are required by the student, parent, department chairman, teacher, and counselor. The final

decision is made by the House Teacher, a member of the administrative team.

Brookline has a K-8 (8 schools), 9-12 grade organization with 2137 students in grades 9-12 (high school). There are over 500 course offerings in the district. Minority populations include 207 Asian students and 175 Black students, a number of whom are bused from Boston. Their student body comes from 57 countries and there are 27 different languages represented. About 80% of the graduates go to college, enrollments are holding and even increasing and the dropout rate is about 1%.

APPENDIX E

STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING STUDENTS IN ATTAINING HIGH LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

APPENDIX E

Strategies for Assisting Students In Attaining High Levels of Achievement

Resources and strategies to aid students have been addressed by the Shaker Heights City School District in several documents, including: Assisting Students In Attaining Higher Levels of Achievement and The Shaker Schools: A commitment to Excellence Basic Skills, ESEA Title I.

For the purposes of clarity in this section, resources are defined as available support systems in the local and broader community and within the school district, but not a direct function of the school system; while strategies have been defined as programs and procedures implemented by the school district.

Resources used in the Shaker Heights City School District have been identified as: universities, churches, community association, SHARE, Dad's Club, Office for Youth, Youth Center, and Kent State Educational Desegregation Assistance Center (KEDS). The above resources were identified during the KEDS workshop in March, 1980. From interviews and documentation from the district, further explanation of these resourses was not elaborate or prevelant. Information presented indicated that churches and youth centers in Cleveland provide tutoring programs for students in the community. Information in the Parents' Handbook indicates one function of the Dad's Club is presenting awards to students who maintain a grade point average of 3.5 during junior and senior high with awards presented at the 9th and 12th grade levels. Other information regarding community support systems was not presented during interviews or viewed in district documentation.

Strategies as defined by available documentation include a large listing of programs directly related to students which include: Achieving Academic Excellence Program (A.A.E.), High School Tutoring Center, Elementary Drop-in Tutoring Center, Advanced Course Programs, Push-EXCEL Program, individualized programs to assist students in pursuit of academic excellence (which include the Center, reading teachers, Catalyst Program and Pupil Personnel Services). Strategies listed that are not directly related to students, but are a function of the administration and staff are: Equal Opportunity in the Classroom (EOC), reorganization of the counseling and guidance program, non-instructional inservice

program, program planning guide, individual course selection sheet, staff communication, letter to parents concerning openness of level systems, PTA newsletter, graduate level course offerings, board policy on human relations, and goal setting. A brief description of each follows:

Achieving Academic Excellence Program (AAE)

Recommendations were made during the summer of 1979 by a group of professional staff members for achieving academic excellence through equal education opportunities for all students. The multi-faceted program included student contact activities, staff development and district-wide efforts. The general recommendations of the committee and/or goals included:

1. The promotion of fairness and good discipline throughout the schools by establishing and upholding high standards for all.
2. Improving the quality of instruction.
3. Improving student performance in the classroom as measured by standardized and teacher-developed tests.
4. Better utilization of staff strengths and more help for overcoming weaknesses.
5. Increasing the level of involvement of the entire learning community, administration, staff, students, parents, etc.
6. Promoting co-curricular activities.
7. Improving everyone's self-image (students, staff, parents, etc.).
8. Improving relationships with parents and utilizing their perceptions to enhance educational opportunities in the district.
9. Re-evaluating and/or establishing criteria for placement in special programs.
10. Encouraging the Board of Education to re-examine Board policy and its implementation in the light of this committee's essential task.

For each segment of the educational community, specific recommendations (as they relate specifically to level 2 students) were outlined, as follows:

From the Board of Education

1. Re-evaluate the present philosophy and policies in order to ensure that they promote academic excellence for all students.
2. Explore the use of outside consultants to provide additional indicators of the district's progress in meeting the goals as set forth in the report.

From the Community

Fundamental to providing equal educational opportunities is the need to develop school and community environments which promote genuine understanding and mutual respect for people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

From the Superintendent

1. Continue visiting the schools periodically and attend staff meetings in each building to give positive support to the efforts of the staff in carrying out the goals of academic excellence.
2. Continue meeting with building administrators to evaluate the progress of the program for achieving academic excellence.
3. Meet with the Key-Parent Liaison(s).
4. Begin meeting with student representatives from all buildings concerning issues of race relations and academic achievement.

From Central Administration

1. Mandate to all building administrators that they must foster an atmosphere of educational excellence for all students and monitor this directive and make recommendations for change when necessary.
2. Include minorities on the faculty and administrative staff that reflect the racial population of the district.
3. Make sure that staff members who are in minority groups have positions of status and prestige equal to those of the majority. Minority staff members should have authority and influence equal to, and perceived to be equal to, those of the majority.

From Building Administrators

On curriculum:

1. Determine whether ability or achievment procedures result in over-representation of minority students in lower level tracts and groupings.
2. Promote the upward mobility of all students into more challenging courses.

On co-curricular activities:

1. When the school provides for co-curricular activities, make sure that equal access and encouragement exist for all students.
2. Require that staff (activity sponsors) actively seek out a cross-section of the students for participation in athletics and other activities.

On home and school communication:

1. Survey the school's parent organization. If any major ethnic group is under-represented, take positive action to enlist additional representation.
2. When there are parent or community concerns about the equity of school policies or practices, form a representative advisory group to help clarify policies.

On staff:

Mandate to all teachers and counselors that they must foster an atmosphere of educational excellence for all students and encourage and support those students who are recommended for enrollment for more demanding subjects and courses.

On curriculum:

Survey lower level courses where minority over-representation is likely to exist. Provide remedial and extra tutorial services in an effort to upgrade skills.

On rules and discipline:

Institute an alternative to suspension program with referral and support activities.

From Instructional Staff and Pupil Personnel Services

1. Fulfill teacher contract to the optimum by respecting, caring for, and educating each student.
2. Be aware of the impact of teacher expectation on academic achievement.
3. Be informed of the cultural and historical background of the school's minority as well as majority students.
4. Provide situations in which students of differentr abilities, races and cultural backgrounds can interact cooperatively to meet their goals.
5. Recognize that parents bear the major responsibility for their children; give the parents cooperation and support in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

On teacher-student interaction:

1. Recognize/reward the academic achievement of bright minority children.
2. Assign students to four/five member multi-racial learning teams.
3. Integrate co-curricular activities.

On Communicating Low Expectations of Students:

1. Insist on active participation from all students.
2. Be willing to repeat or reword questions or provide a clue for responses.
3. Wait longer for responses.
4. Be sincere in the evaluation of responses.
5. Criticize less frequently.
6. Praise and/or confirm correct answers.
7. Seat students preceived as low achievers close to the teacher.

From Non-instructional Staff

1. Provide orientation to the philosophy of equal educational opportunities for all to new employees.
2. A section on dealing equally and fairly with all people should be included in the evaluation forms.
3. Non-instructional staff should receive orientation in how to deal with the public effectively.
4. There should be a revision of all non-instructional staff handbooks to include a section on public relations.

From Students

1. Students will participate in incorporating Student's Responsibilities in the school's handbook.
2. Students will help to organize and participate positively in the schools' human relations groups.
3. Students will become involved in organizing support systems to help peers.
4. Students will become involved in utilizing a talent bank of professional staff.

From Parents

1. Demonstrate interest in attending and participating in school functions such as conferences, programs, open houses, or co-curricular activities.
2. Communicate concerns initially to teachers and reserve judgement until checking facts.
3. Become active in establishing a Key-Parent program in your school community.

In General

1. Provide inservice training for all staff members in the area of equal opportunities in the classroom.
2. Set up drop-in tutoring centers open Monday through Thursday evenings.

3. Establish councils for human relations composed of students at the secondary level.
4. Hire a Key-Parent liaison person(s).
5. Set up an early remediation system involving parents and intervene when the child first falls behind.
6. Consider hiring a curriculum specialist who could coordinate curriculum work, K-12, paying close attention to the special needs of low achieving children.
7. Establish a workshop in human relations for the non-instructional staff on NEOTA Day.
8. Bring graduate level courses for credit into the district on a regular basis. Courses on mastery teaching, racism, black history, techniques for encouraging reluctant learners, update on educational research, etc.
9. Develop a packet of materials which are designed to attain the goals set forth in this proposal and to help evaluate progress toward these goals.

Responses to this section were selected from interviews with district personnel, and from district documents: Assisting Students in Attaining Academic Excellence and A Commitment to Excellence. Other resources are noted in the text.

Progress has been made on the A.A.E. program since the Board of Education approved the committee's report on September 11, 1979. In regard to the specific recommendations for building administrators, all building principals and staff developed their own A.A.E. strategies and plans in the fall of 1979. Individual building plans, according to the information reviewed, enacted most of the recommendations that were selected from the original proposal. Other student oriented programs designed to help students who qualify for level 2 or are defined as under-achievers are described. It should be noted that none of the programs identified specific and exclusive goals for level 2 students only. From their over all goals, specific level 2 student needs were identified. Therefore, all programs listed have been reviewed.

High School Tutoring

The center which has been in operation since 1979, has served 472 students during the first six months. The report indicates that 48% of the total were minority students and 51% non-minority. The administration planned for the tutoring center to

continue during 1980-81 with additional programs of mini-workshops on study, writing, and test taking skills.

Elementary Drop-in Tutoring Center

During the summer of 1980, a propsal was submitted to develop the elementary drop-in tutoring program as described in the A.A.E. recommendations. Modeled after the high school tutoring center, the program proposal included a strong parent involvement. No data was reviewed on this program and only from the description of the program goals were the following components found: (a) assisting students who have deficiencies in basic skills as measured by achievement scores; (b) early skill assistance as a preventive measure; (c) attempting to motivate and enhance learning; (d) involving parents more effectively in helping their children with school related skills; (e) providing resources for parent use; (f) conducting meetings and workshops on topics related to student academic skills.

Advanced Course Program

The program is designed to offer an opportunity for students to maintain high academic goals through jr high by serving as a bridge from elementary to high school levels 4 and 5. Two classes are offered in English, math and science at each of the jr high schools. An additional effort has been made to insure one third minority enrollment. The goal of this program is to have minority students enrolled in advanced courses at the jr high level to enhance their success in the advanced level courses in high school. Selection of students for this program followed the same criteria as the special projects classes: teacher/administrator recommendations, achievement test scores, and IQ test scores. This program was scheduled to select students by March-April of 1979. No data was reviewed regarding the enrollment.

Push-EXCEL Program

Push-EXCEL has existed in the high school since the 1978 academic year. The purpose of this program is to encourage the participation of the community (parents, media, business, industry, students and educators) in a coordinated effort to stimulate academic excellence. According to district documents, there is an increasing number of students who have become aware of the program and its goals and have demonstrated their support by participating in Push-EXCEL activities. More students have become

assertive in their efforts to guide their own education by seeking teacher assistance and have used the program staff and services to a larger extent than ever before.

Parents are referring students to the program and are showing a strong desire to participate in the program goals by helping their children at home. Data indicates that 278 students individually participated in conferences with the Push-EXCEL staff during the 1979-80 school year, and 209 out of 550 students signed pledges for academic excellence through the program. The program has been active in developing and holding workshops for counseling, career and vocational education, job interviewing skills, financial aid and community volunteer services. Additionally, the program has sponsored voter registration drives, group counseling, parent workshops, race relations workshops, home and parent visitations, and presentations to community groups. From the evaluation of the objectives submitted for the district's report, the Push-EXCEL Program has been successful in meeting its objectives for the two months reported, March-April, 1980.

Individualized programs to assist students in the pursuit of academic excellence.

The Center

The Center is a counseling, tutorial program presenting a multi-faceted approach to academic and behavioral problems. In operation since 1979, its main function is the in-school suspension program. However, its resources and services are available to any student. Referrals may be for suspension or self-referral. Suspended students complete assignments of the classroom teacher in addition to participating in group discussions designed to encourage an exchange on problems and concerns and to share experiences. Resource personnel work with students on a one-to-one basis. Such resource personnel include reading and study skills teachers, faculty, counselors, EXCEL staff, vocational and job placement personnel, juvenile officials, peer-counselors, scholarship personnel, social workers, guidance counselors, psychologist and Shaker Heights Youth Center staff. In 1979, the Center recorded 175 formal suspensions and 160 other students. No racial data was reviewed regarding the use of the Center by race or level.

The Catalyst Program

From interviews with administrators the Catalyst Program was described as being designed for students who want to earn credit for a non-traditional academic program. Begun in the 1972-73 school year, the program allows a student, by signing a contract (defining their expected performance goals and objectives and how they will achieve the credit) with the program director, to obtain required course credit outside the traditional school program. The program participants are generally of two extremes: those who are behind or not able to meet curriculum demands traditionally, and those who are seeking advanced or additional course credits. In both cases, the student is expected to meet the exact guidelines that the course is designed to meet during the year. Sponsors in the community are used as teachers in some cases to act as teacher/mentor for students. Community sponsors are expected to be degreed or experts in their field. Independent study programs are courses taken outside the traditional school program but are elective credits rather than the required courses of the Catalyst Program. This program has been used as a bridge for students who are attempting to move into a higher level or more intensive program. In most cases, however, independent study was described at the beginning of a level 3 course, especially if taught by a certified teacher. Community participants generally do not have the expertise to decide a level for a course. Science programs are described as being level 4 for advance science credits taken independently. This is done with the cooperation of the department head to determine what constitutes level 4 work. Most level 2 students who take independent courses are enrolled because of classes failed or to make up work, according to interview resources. On occasion, level 2 students have taken independent study classes, for interest, that are not offered in the school curriculum. Auto mechanics is one example.

Special Education

Three objectives were defined for the special education program: (1) to provide instruction which is appropriate for the individual needs of each child in a given program, (2) to design and implement on-going evaluative procedures which will indicate the effectiveness of each child's individual program and incorporate the needed changes, and (3) to provide these services in accordance with appropriate procedural safeguards. The assessment procedures seek information from all appropriate areas of the

child's functioning and environment for the purposes of yielding implications for intervention strategies and/or educational programming. Included in this assessment are the child's educational performance, learning characteristics and unique educational needs. The service delivery process includes referral, assessment, placement, and periodic review. Parents are considered active and vital participants in all phases of the indentification, evaluation, placement and review process. If a communication barrier is observed, the district is described as taking whatever action is necessary to insure that the parents understand all proceedings.

Strategies that are a function of the administration and staff are:

Equal Opportunity in the Classroom Inservice (EOC)

Participants in the EOC Program receive an intensive and extensive view of teacher behavior in the classroom. Teachers are made aware of how they interact with all students in the classroom with the expected outcomes that they will be better trained to promote positive student growth. Prior to fall, 1980, sixty-four professional staff had completed the training and the administration was committed to continuing the program with goals of having all professional staff members go through the training.

Reorganization of Counseling and Guidance Program

The reorganization of this program was to improve counseling staff communication with students and parents. In doing so, the following areas were defined:

1. Peer-Counseling -- students are trained to help other students in affective and cognitive areas. The program is in operation in the secondary buildings. There are approximately 75 students providing services and approximately 50% are in a minority group. The program has been effective in working with students who have had serious deficiencies in academic work according to documents of the district.

2. Group Guidance -- A technique used to counteract negative peer influences of junior and senior high students. This program involves group discussion regarding scheduling, study habits, and personal problems.

3. Counseling Assignments -- counselors are assigned to a grade level and remain with that grade until they leave junior or senior high in an effort to improve student and parent awareness of the defined person at school charged with the responsibilities for counseling.

4. Increased services -- inservice programs for counselors have been initiated with emphasis on improving the minority students' participation into the mainstream of academics

5. College & Career Information Dissemination -- a three night College/Career Program has been initiated along with informal dissemination of college information to enhance the opportunity for students to be admitted into colleges that represent their first choice.

The following efforts were made to seek the upgrading of black students in the area of levels:

1. Emphasis was stressed to department heads to encourage all staff members to seek students in their current courses to take higher level courses.

2. A form was made available to all staff members for documenting their efforts.

3. All counselors were encouraged to have students consider a higher level course during conferences.

4. A signed form by parents included the statement, "Parent signature indicates approval of course and level selection", and was placed directly under the line the parent signed on so that the parent understood what they were signing.

Non-instructional Inservice

This program was initiated to provide the non-instructional staff with issues that are an integral part of the educational process including:

a. orientation to the philosophy of equal educational opportunity

b. awareness of how to deal equally with all students

c. awareness of school policies and regulations and how to enforce them or report infractions to the appropriate personnel.

d. orientation on how to deal with the public effectively.

Graduate Level Courses

As a recommendation of AAE, the University of Akron and Cleveland State University have offered graduate level credit courses in the Shaker Heights City School District for the upgrading of the professional staff, and with the outcome of improving the ability of the professional staff in delivering services to all students in the district. According to the guidelines of the AAE recommendations, the classes were to address race relations, ethnic history, etc. One course description reviewed was entitled, "Active Learning in the Elementary Classroom," an exploration of the Piagetial theory. One objective of this course indicated a goal of inventing useful classroom strategies for intervening effectively to help all children attain their intellectual potential, particularly those who are the hardest to reach.

According to district documents, other in school strategies listed included materials and publications and/or policies that are reflective of the district's goals of providing quality educational services to all students. Included in this category was information regarding the Board policy on human relations, PTA newsletter, goal setting, program planning guide and the individual course selection sheet. In all publications, the district identified efforts to facilitate parent awareness of level placement and encourage parent involvement in student course selection.

The information described above of the programs in the Shaker Heights City School District are designed to improve the academic achievement of all underachieving students, a disproportionate number of whom are minority students, and are further rooted in the pursuit of the district mission, to achieve excellence for all, according to district document, A Commitment to Excellence.

In response to the review team for improving strategies to help underachievers, school district staff listed the following strategies:

1. Improve coordination of Basic Skills Program.
2. Project EXCEL should be expanded into elementary school.
3. Improve the condition of the Elementary Tutoring Center.
4. Develop Early Childhood Education in the district.
5. Raise teacher expectations.
6. Expand pre-kindergarten program with parent involvement.
7. For each grade level, develop a skills criteria for promotion for reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic.
8. Program for students who lack grade level skills.
9. Abolish homogeneous grouping in elementary schools.
10. No pull-out programs for special services - they need continuity.
11. Eliminate humiliating behaviors that compound poor self-image.
12. Parent education and outreach regarding rational choice of level selection.
13. Have two teachers combine level 2 & 3 to gain advantage of two appropaches to the subject and utilize positive peer pressure techniques.

From the interviews of administrators regarding special education in the Shaker Heights City School District, the program was further described.

The district provides for a learning disability program in every secondary building and there is a tutor in almost all buildings. Programs include: Positive Behavior Classes - a program for severe behavior problems in the elementary level. There are two units of the programs that serve the entire district, and one unit for the junior high school. Students are placed in this program when it is determined that the primary cause of academic problems is behavior rather than learning disability. (If the behavior is so severe that the child's behavior is not appropriate for public school, then residential treatment facilities are used.) The residential facility is financed in part by special education funds, making the education part of the placement, public.

Eastwood Day Treatment Facility

Regionally funded by the Cuyahoga County Board, the center is utilized for emotionally disturbed children where they attend the center as well as take some courses at their home school on a part-time basis.

Developmental Delay Program

It is for three and four year old children suspected of having learning disabilities of some type.

Severe Multiple Impairment Program

It is for children age 6 to 11 who are severly retarded.

Also included in the category of special education is an early entrance program for children who show exceptional ability from age 4 1/2 to 5. Additionally, the district has speech and language programs for processing, patterning, and articulation.

Learning disabled students are identified from multifactor criteria including standardized test results, reports from hearing and speech specialists as well as the teaching specialist placement team. School staff, principal, teacher and special education staff, as a team, determine if the child is eligible for services. While the program is based on a mainstream philosophy, the child may be in the regular classroom part of the day as well as receive special support from the LD program. The racial population of the LD program is described as being 50% minority, and in respect to the total school population, the minority:non-minority percentage runs 40:60.

In respect to minority children in LD classrooms, non-discriminatory multi-faceted testing is utilized to alleviate the problem of biased assessment through standardized testing that influences IQ test scores.

APPENDIX F

LIST OF HIGH SCHOOLS CONTACTED BY
STATE FOR NATIONAL SURVEY

INFORMATION FOR THE SHAKER HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PART I

1. Name and address of school district: _____

_____

2. Name of school: _____

3. Name of a contact person within the school administration: _____

_____

4. District's total school enrollment: _____

5. High school enrollment: _____

PART II

1. Do you have Advanced Placement courses at the high school level:

_____ yes _____ no

2. Do you have remedial courses at the high school level? _____ yes _____ no

3. Are advanced placement or remedial courses electives? _____ yes _____ no

4. If yes, what procedures are used for placing students in the courses? (Check all that apply)

   a. _____ teacher recommendation

   b. _____ counselor recommendation

   c. _____ self selection

   d. _____ parental pressure

   e. _____ peer group pressure

   e. _____ other (please describe) _____

   _____

5. If advanced placement or remedial courses are not electives, what procedures are used for placing students into such courses? _____

_____

_____

6. Are minority student enrollments in both the advanced placement and remedial courses proportionate to your total high school enrollment?

yes _____ no _____

a. What are the percentages in the advanced placement courses?

_____ % white students _____ % minority students

b. What are the percentages in the remedial courses?

_____ % white students _____ % minority students

7. In your opinion, what are the causes of low minority enrollment in advanced placement courses in this country when it happens? (Check all that apply)

a. _____ intelligence

b. _____ economic status

c. _____ family background

d. _____ teacher perceptions of student

e. _____ counselor perceptions of student

f. _____ student perceptions of teacher

g. _____ lack of student motivation

h. _____ peer pressure

i. _____ Other (please describe) _____

_____

8. Do you feel that minority student enrollment in advanced placement courses is a problem in your district? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, why? _____

_____

a. Has this been a problem in the past? _____ yes _____ no

b. Do you foresee this as continuing to be a concern? _____ yes _____ no

c. Why? _____

_____

9. What approaches have been taken in your district to increase minority student enrollment in advanced courses?

   a. Describe (please describe in detail)

      (ex: teacher in-service: Who conducts the program? What is covered? Who else is involved? How long is the program?)

10. Can you recommend other methods to make advanced placement courses more accessible to minority students?

    a. Describe (please describe in detail)

11. Was there a mandate for your district to address the problem of low minority enrollment in advanced placement classes? _____ yes _____ no

12. If there was a mandate, did it come from...(check all that apply)

    _____ court

    _____ community

    _____ school board

    _____ superintendent

    _____ other (please describe) _____

13. Are there any support systems in your district specifically designed to discourage minority students from dropping out of advanced placement courses? _____ yes _____ no

14. If yes, are they ... (check all that apply)

_____ tutoring

_____ regular counseling sessions

_____ regular contacts with parents

_____ minimum time limits spent enrolled in course .

15. a. Do you know of any other districts which are faced with the problem of disproportionately low minority enrollments in advanced placement courses and disproportionately high minority enrollments in remedial courses? _____ yes _____ no

b. If yes, please give the name and address of the district(s):

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. a. Do you know of any individuals or school districts which have successfully dealt with the problem of low minority enrollment in advanced placement courses or disproportionately high minority enrollments in remedial courses? _____ yes _____ no

b. If yes, please give the name and address of the individual(s) or district(s).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Comments: _____

Thank you for taking the time to share your knowledge with us. The enrollment of minority students in advanced secondary courses is an issue facing many school districts in this country and your responses will contribute greatly to our understanding of the issue and our ability to respond to it.

APPENDIX G

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
SHAKER HEIGHTS RESEARCH PROJECT

APPENDIX G

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
Shaker Heights Research Project

DIRECTIONS: Be sure to greet the student pleasantly and make him or her comfortable. Explain that the purpose of this talk is to learn why they chose the particular courses that they did for next year. This information will help the school district to plan courses for the future. Everything that the student tells you will be held in the strictest confidence and their name will not be used when the information they give us is reported.

A. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Race: _____ 2. Sex: _____

3. Grade Level: _____

4. Father's Occupation: _____

5. Mother's Occupation: _____

6. GPA: _____

7. Plans after High School: _____

8. How long have you been in the Shaker Heights School District? _____ yrs.

B. COURSE SELECTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

	Course	Level	Why did you select this course?*	Did any person influence this choice?*
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

C. IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT POTENTIAL INFLUENCES OF COURSE SELECTION

SAY: "I am going to read to you several things that may have influenced your decision to take particular courses. For each one tell me if it was important to you or not.

---

*Here is where rapport becomes important. You may need to probe for the real reasons.

	INFLUENCE	(circle one) IMPORTANT?		ANY COMMENTS?**
1.	Parent's advice	yes	no	
2.	What brother or sister had taken	yes	no	
3.	Preparing yourself for after high school	yes	no	
4.	Want the best possible education	yes	no	
5.	Teacher's advice	yes	no	
6.	Don't think you could do well in high level courses	yes	no	
7.	Want to be with friends	yes	no	
8.	Counselor's advice	yes	no	
9.	Want easy courses	yes	no	
10.	Didn't know what else to take	yes	no	
11.	Have not taken prerequisites for other courses	yes	no	
12.	Not interested in other courses	yes	no	
13.	Didn't have any choice	yes	no	
14.	Wanted to get certain teachers	yes	no	
15.	Don't want to spend a lot of time on homework	yes	no	
16.	Teachers don't think I can do well in school	yes	no	
17.	Counselor doesn't think I can do well in school	yes	no	
18.	Concern over what other students think	yes	no	
19.	Didn't think about my selections that much	yes	no	
20.	Wanted to avoid certain teachers	yes	no	

**Note any qualifications or pertinent comments that student gives for any influence.

21. Other: Are there any other things that you thought about when you selected your courses for next year? (List):

D. OTHER

1. Are there some things about the system that you can share with me that caused you to end up in the courses that you are taking now or next year?

2. Over all of your years in school, what do you think were the most important things that got you into the courses you are in now and next year?

3. Is there anything else you think I should know about the course selection system?

Thank you very much for spending this time and sharing your thoughts with me. I will keep everything you said anonymous so that your name will never be connected to what you have told me.

Interviewer's Initials: _____ Date: _____

Time at the beginning of the Interview: _____

APPENDIX H

RELEVANT NOTES FROM THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE ON THE SHAKER HEIGHTS CURRICULUM STUDY

APPENDIX H

RELEVANT NOTES FROM THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE
ON THE SHAKER HEIGHTS CURRICULUM STUDY

1. Factors that characterize effective desegregated schools (Edgar Epps, University of Chicago in an interview with Communication Quarterly, Fall 1980).

   a. School population is not predominately any roll.
   b. Mixing of high and low achieving students.
   c. Classroom and activity organization for substancial interaction away races.
   d. Unprejudiced teachers who support and insist on high performance and racial equality.
   e. Little rigid tracking or ability grouping.
   f. Supportive leadership from building and central administrators toward desegregation.
   g. Strong parental support through direct involvement in instructional activities.
   h. Use of multi-ethnic curricular materials.
   i. Desegregated faculty.
   j. Continuing program of staff development aimed at problems relating to successful desegregation.

2. The Parents of minority students do not know what their children are entitled to, nor are respected by school personnel. Good interactions and relationships are not obtained.

   Children go through a year of Headstart classes. The next year there is no kindergarten available for them. They have a good year in sixth grade, then are sent to an understaffed junior high school. Before going to high school they are told that they can pass only general or vocational courses. During senior high school, the guidance counselor fails to inform them of the possibility of entering pre-college and Upward Bound programs. . . there is no way that his parents, alienated and intimidated by the school system and its middle class personnel, can submit a grievance and be assured that it will be considered seriously. (Herbert Kohl Harvard Educ. Review, 1968, 38 (1), 155-160.)

3. Harvard Ed. Review, 1968, 38 (1).

   Pettigrew discusses two processes which he says are important in studying the dynamics of the interracial classroom - - fate control and social isolation. He states: "Each child faces a two-stage problem: first, he must learn that he can, within reasonably broad limits act effectively upon his surroundings; and second, he must evaluate his own relative capabilities for mastering the environment" Minorities' problems come about in the first stage.

RELEVANT NOTES (CONT.)

4. Benjamin S. Bloom. Human Characteristics and School Learning. New York: McGraw - Hill, 1976.

   There are three factors that determine achievement:

   a. Cognitive entry behaviors - The prereguisite types of knowledge, skills, and competencies essential to the learning of a new task.
   b. Affective entry characteristics - The student's motivation to learn a new task.
   c. Quality of instruction - The extent to which the instruction is appropriate to the needs of the learner.

5. Richard Bloom, Martin Whiteman, and Martin Deutsch. In Martin Deutsch and Associates. The Disadvantaged Child. New York: Basic Books, 1967, 309-317.

   Social class is a more potent variable than race in predicting environmental and attitudinal factors that affect school achievement.

6. Benjamin S. Bloom. Stability and Change in Human Characteristics. New York: John Wiley, 1964, ;; 184-191.

   a. Differences in general intelligence are likely to be related to be.

      1. Stimulation provided in the environment for verbal development.
      2. Extent to which affection and reward are related to verbal-reasoning accomplishments.
      3. Encouragement of active interaction with problems, exploration of the environment, and the learning of new skills.

   b. Differences in school achievement are likely to be related to.

      1. Meaning which education comes to have for one's personal advancement and role in society.
      2. Level of education of and value placed on education by the significant adults in the individual's life.
      3. Extent to which school achievement is motivated and reinforced by parents or significant adults in the individual's life.

RELEVANT NOTES (CONT.)

7. James Coleman. Equality of Educational Opportunity, 1966.

   a. Family background is of great importance, for school achievement.
   b. The relationship of family background to achievement does not diminish over the years of school.
   c. Teachers, rather than facilities and curriculum, exert the largest school influence on achievement.
   d. Social composition within the school student population exerts a large influence on achievment.
   e. A sense of control of the environment and a belief in the responsiveness of the environment is highly related to achievement.

8. Sidney P. Marland, Jr. Education of the Gifted and Talented. 1971

   a. "Parental attitudes toward learning affect the achievement of groups of children. Thus Jewish children as a population were found to possess markedly high achievement motivation. Conversely, a number of studies dealing with lower class, or lower socio-economic families, noted that these families do not set adequate goals for their children and even are hostile toward the nation. (That Children Should Seek Education; Pg. A21); (Reference to a book by Jan Raph, Miriam Goldberg, and Harry Passow. Bright Underachievers. New York: Teachers College Press, 1966)

   b. Economically deprived black children who were given learning apportunities made significantly greater gains that did children of comparable ability from nondeprived backgrounds (A28). (Reference to a project report by Seymour Fashback and others. A Training, Demonstration, and Research Program for Remediation of Learning Disorders in Culturally Disadvantaged Youth. Sacremento; California, State Department of Education, 1969).

9. Francis S. Chase. Qualities and Opportunities.

   A characteristic of effective schools is found in the principal. In the most effective schools, principals were greeted by name by many students and were able to respond with the pupil's name and with some word of praise or admiration. The principal had detailed knowledge of what the special needs of the student populations were and how well these needs were being served; also of the strengths and weaknesses of each staff member.

RELEVANT NOTES (CONT.)

In some of the least effective schools the principal seemed to have little knowledge of the population being served, of the kinds of homes from which students came, or of the abilities and other characteristics of teachers and staff members.

The schools and systems that seemed to be moving most rapidly towards meeting educational needs effectively were characterized by a continuing search for capabilities and talents that might be developed, recognition and reinforcement of achievement, and high expectations for every member of the organization, including both staff and students.

10. Christopher Jencks. Inequality. A Reassessment of the Effective of Family and Schooling in America.

Social Class attitudes, values and taste for schooling play an even larger role than aptitude and money in educational attainment.

--Middle and upper-class students may have higher educational aspirations because they feel under more pressure from home to continue their education than students from working-class and lower-class homes.
--Middle-class students may have higher occupational aspirations than working and lower-class students.
--Working-class students may have lower aspirations because they "know" that they cannot go to college.
--Children with work-class parents or lower-class parents evidently assume that if they dislike school, they can and should dropout.
--Even if a middle-class child does not enjoy school, he evidently assumes that he will have to stay in school for a long time.

11. Christopher Jencks. Inequality.

Assigning students to a higher level is like giving them a high grade. It tells students that they are going to go farther than their classmates . . . they see themselves as an elite and react accordingly.

12. Willie D. Hawley. Increasing the Effectiveness of School.

The available evidence on the role of personality and social-psychological factors in the achievement process suggests that while they are not unimportant, intervention efforts and resources may be better spent in other ways than to try to influence self-esteem directly. For example, Epps (1978), Hare (1977), and Linsenmeier and Wortman (1978) each provide evidence that teacher attitudes toward minority children

is one area that needs additional attention. Gerard and Miller (1975) found that minority children performed less well and showed lower self-evaluations as teachers! Bias increased.

The evidence does indicate a need to make schools more responsive to the developmental needs of minority children. It appears that some minority children have learned not to depend upon schools as an environment from which they can secure reliable, healthy and helpful self-image information (pp. 41-42).

13. Sarah L. Lightfoot. Worlds Apart. 1978

In a recent observational study done in middle and lower-class public schools in New York, anthropologist, Eleanor Burke Leacock noted the strong class interests of school bureaucracies. Middle-class students were rewarded for individuality, aggressiveness and inititive, while lower-class students were reinforced for passivity, withdrawal, and obedience.

14. Sarah L. Lightfoot. Worlds Apart. 1978.

In Carol Stack's ethnography of black family life in a Midwestern City, she documents powerful and supportive social networks and bonding patterns; giving sustenance to families, multiple role models and sources of identification for young children. Informal adoption patterns, mutual-aid networks, pooling or resources, and extended families exist.

15. Sarah L. Lightfoot. Worlds Apart. 1978. (Pg. 171)

Children seem to learn and grow in schools where parents and teachers share similar visions and collaborate on guiding children forward. For a long time we have understood that the magic of suburban schools is not merely the relative affluence and abundant resources of the citizens, but also the consonance between what parents want for their children and what the teachers believe is educationally sound. When their perspectives begin to deverge too widely, suburban parents become vocal and demanding and teachers are forced to respond with explanations and clear good setting.

16. Ronald Edmonds. A Discussion of the Literature and Issues Related to Effective Schooling.

Compensatory education makes the child responsible for learning to learn in the ways that the school is proposed to teach. As an educational strategy, compensatory education doesn't work because it doesn't make

the school responsible for teaching in the ways that the children are prepared to learn . . . . a varied response to what children bring to school would necessitate understanding, appreciating, accepting, and responding to the variety of cultures pupils represent.

17. Ronald Edmonds. A Discussion of the Literature and Issues Related to Effective Schooling.

In comparing low-achieving and high-achieving schools there is evidence that the high-achieving schools have:

a. Greater support of principal for teachers.
b. More task orientated teaching.
c. A greater atmosphere conducive for learning and student effort.
d. A large number of adult volunteers in math.
e. Fewer paid aids in reading.
f. Use of teacher aids for non-teaching tasks such as classroom paperwork, playground, discipline.
g. Greater access to outside the classroom materials.
h. Better support services.
i. Fewer subgroups for instruction.
j. Better teacher job satisfaction.

18. Wilbur Brookner and Larry Lezotte. Changes in School Characteristics Coindicent With Changes in Student Achievement, 1977.

Differences between improving and declining schools on achievement tests were found to include:

a. Accomplishment of basic reading and mathematic objectives in improving schools.
b. A belief that all students can master the basic objectives in improving schools.
c. High and increasing levels of expectations for students in improving schools.
d. Teacher responsibility for teaching basic reading and math skills (as opposed to parents or students being responsible) in improving schools.
e. Greater amount of time on reading and math objectives in improving schools.
f. Principal is an instructional leader, is assertive in that role, and issues responsibility for evaluating achievement of basic objectives in improving schools.
g. Improving schools more accepting of accountability.

19. Ralph Scott and Herbert Walberg. Schools Alone are Insufficient: A Response to Edmonds, Educational Leadership, October 1979.

Three sets of factors produce academic learning:

a. Student ability and motivation.
b. Amount and quality of instruction along with the social-psychological morale of the classroom group.
c. Educationally stimulating qualities of the home environment.

The student as an individual, the school, and the home are like a three-legged stool; it is as strong as its weakest leg; strengthening the stronger legs is far less productive than strengthening the weakest.

20. Evaluation Center, December 1980.

The advantages and disadvantages of weighted grading as reflected in the professional literature are as follows:

Advantages

a. It helps to prevent discrimination against the brighter students in their effort for leadership and class ranking.
b. It compensates for the extra work required in difficult course levels.
c. It encourages able students to take the most difficult subjects without fear of loss in class ranking.
d. When coupled with a level system, it allows weaker students to earn high grades in work suited to their ability.

Disadvantages and Criticisms

a. It does not compensate, in terms of classrank, effort on the part of hardworking students in lower level courses. Thus, it can be defeating.
b. It compounds the subjective errors that are made in evaluating students. Weights can be arbitrary.
c. It can be misinterpreted as differentiating the value of content covered in courses at different levels. Weighting systems can be misinterpreted.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE
THAT ARE PERTINENT TO THE SHAKER HEIGHTS
CURRICULUM STUDY

1. Many have exhibited an interest in the well being of minortiy children in the public schools. These people could serve as ombudsmen. This would require special training and school policy, but in the end they would be able to enter the schools, observe, and help in the development of quality education for minority children (Herbert Kohl in Harvard Educational Review, 1968, 38 (1), 155-160.)

2. Direct school building principals to review each class for racial mix and to reassign students as needed to maintain desegregated classes. (Sourcebook of Equal Educational Opportunity, p.386). Desegregated classroom groupings may be facilitated by individualized instruction, mastery learning programs, and team teaching facilitated by open classrooms or learning centers. (Same source, p.386).

3. Staff development needs in desegregated school districts tend to center on:
   a. Human relations
   b. Conflict/Discipline
   c. Community Participation

   (Rand Report: Staff Development Programs in Desegregated Settings,1980.)

4. School system renewal during the period of 1977-80 in this country has included the following:

   a. Adaptation of curriculum and instruction to each individual's stage of development, cultural values, and past experiences; and continuing experiences designed for optimum realization of capabilities.
   b. Membership in a school, or other social unit, which promotes learning through supportive social interaction, provides adequate learning materials and facilities and sets high expectations for learning behaviors and achievement.
   c. Provision for coordination of in-school and out-of-school experiences, through treating parents as partners in learning and the school and community agencies as complementary settings for learning.
   d. Alternative programs and/or schools to enable students and their partents to choose the educational opportunities they believe are best suited to their needs and aspirations.
   e. System-wide provision for continuing education of teachers, principals, and other staff members so that they become more perceptive of educational needs and more ingenious in finding ways of meeting the needs.

SUGGESTIONS (CONT.)

f. Close collaboration with a wide variety of community agencies and services so that the resources and opportunities offered by the society -- business and industry, cultural and social institutions, and persons from a wide variety of cultures and occupations -- are brought to bear on the continuing enhancement of education for all.
g. Systematic processes of planning, management, and evaluation which stimulate and monitor improvement (or reveal short comings) in the functioning of schools, service departments and other units. (Francis S. Chase. Educational Quandries and Opportunities. 1980 pp. 36-37).

5. The Philadelphica Early Childhood Education Program is based on the concept that low-income children, under favorable conditions, can achieve in the basic skills as well as middle class children. The program stresses positive reenforcement of desired behaviors where learning of specific skills and staying on task are rewarded. The program includes a child development center which offers an infant-toddler program, a pre-school program, a k-5 elementary program, a teacher-parent center, a traveling teacher center, and learning centers which also provide training to teachers. A notable feature is continuing evaluation of plans, processes, and outcomes by a comprehensive Early Childhood Evaluation Unit. Regularly scheduled planning sessions consider evaluative data and how it can be applied to program improvement (In Francis S. Chase. Educational Quandries and Opportunities, 1980).

6. The Dade County Extended School Program offers remedial students carefully planned after-school sessions instead of pulling them out of regular classes. The after-school sessions have : (1) a low adult to student ratio (15:1) (2) supervised independent activities to instill the habit of regular reading and practice of skills, (3) provision of incentives such as a book, an educational field trip, awards, and other forms of recognition. (4) close involvement of parents, (5) instruction by carefully selected and especially qualified teachers, (6) materials of instruction that include detailed, specific skills lessons, (7) a five-day a week schedule of two 45-minute instruction periods and an intervening one-half hour teacher - supervised snack period. (In Francis S. Chase. Educational Quandries and Opportunities, 1980).

7. The Chicago Mastery Learning Reading Program assumes that all students can learn well if given appropriate opportunities. Research and Evaluation staff are assigned to the preparation of instructional materials, consisting of guides for teachers, student activity sheets, formative tests, enrichment activities, and remediation exercises. Basal readers and other reading materials also are used in regular instruction and in enrichment activities. Mastery of objectives is measured by criterion - referred tests developed by the Chicago Schools. These materials are used in all elementary schools, basic skills centers,

and summer learning centers. (In Francis S. Chase. Educational Quandries and Opportunities, 1980).

8. The Chicago Early Assessment and Remedial Project is used to identify pre-kindergarten children who are likely to experience learning difficulties before children enter Kindergarten. The screening and diagnostic procedure includes questionaires to parents, teacher ratings, and tests. (In Francis S. Chase. Educational Quandries and Opportunities, 1980).

9. The literature suggests that schools can be improved by focusing available energies and resources on student achievement in basic skills instead of expanding such energies and resources over a wide spectrum of activities. The successful interventions involve multiple tactics to attain the goals. Such multiple - tactic change strategies necessitate effective planning and coordination. (David L. Clark and others. Exceptional Urban Elementary Schools , 1979).

10. Portland, Oregon and Dallas, Texas have extensive volunteer training programs, which include orientations, workshops, slide-tape presentations, and individual training. Dade County has a volunteer's Development Project to enhance the use of volunteers for critical instructional needs in reading and math. Tutoring was thus provided for students in grades 2-6 who were below the national norms in basic skills (Francis S. Chase, Educational Quandries and Opportunities, 1980).

11. In New York City the School Improvement Project uses technical assistants to work with school planning groups in planning, monitoring, and evaluating efforts to improve student achievement.

12. In Denver, an Instructional Resource Team provides concentrated assistance to building staffs working on curriculum improvement.

13. The Greensville County Virginia School system has ended social promotions and require students to achieve satisfacory levels of competence before being assigned to a higher grade. Mastery of skills for a grade are measured with achievement tests partial promotion is used for students who master some required skills, but not others. A double in period or block schedule is used for flexible scheduling of instruction in the secondary schools. (Phi Delta Kuppan, March 1977)

14. The Push/Excel program has developed guidelines for parents and students at the secondary level on how to improve achievement. (Black Enterprise, September 1978)

15. Human relations type activities and inservice training for teachers are less important in shaping the attitudes of children than the restructuring of classroom learning activities to include interacial interactions and to give feedback and rewards tied to performance. (Willie D. Hawley, Increasing the Effectiveness of School Desegregation: Lessons from the Research, 1980)

16. Encourage students to complete with goals rather than each other. (Willie D. Hawley, Increasing the Effectiveness of School Desegregation: Lessons from the Research, 1980)

17. Among 75 strategies that have been tested (see attached), the following were found to enhance academic achievement:

    a. Magnet schools and special programs.
    b. establishing in-school parent-teacher committee to serve as resource specialists (minority parents)
    c. Establishing in-school parent-teacher committee to provide counseling to and handle grievances of parents, teachers, and students.
    d. Intervention teams composed of parents, teachers, and students.
    e. Upgrading teacher skills in instruction.
    f. Staff and teachers receiving training in classroom teaching strategies to to accommodate wide variations in student ability.
    g. Parent involvement in school activities/parent - staff and faculty social activities.
    h. Increased and improved school - home contacts.
    i. Staff and teacher training in human relations.
    j. Staff and teachers receiving training in teaching strategies that facilitate cooperative integrated learning experiences.
    k. Adminstrators, staff, and teachers receiving training in and developing explicit policies for identifying and placing students in special curricula in nondiscriminatory ways.
    l. Reduced class sizes.
    m. Compensatory classes for low achieving students.
    n. Tutorial for low achieving students (i.e., peers, adult volunteers, teacher aides).
    o. Non-graded/alternative grading instructional format.
    p. Employ teacher aides/reduce student - instructor ratio.
    q. Policies to prevent disproportionate minority suspensions and expulsions (e.g., explicit discipline code with due process).
    r. Special extra-curricular and non-academic programs.
    s. Maintaining order (minimizing disruption)
    t. Staff and teachers receiving training in classroom discipline techniques.
    u. Increasing student - teacher contact.

    (Willie D. Hawley)

18. It is important to recognize that the presence of parents in the school not only provides more adults to teach reading or offer help and support to children but also transforms the culture of the school. With black mothers present, there is no way that the curriculum and environment could remain unchanged. Even if the content of the lesson appears the same on paper, the transmission of the lesson takes on a different equality and character when presented by the mothers. Even if the concepts are unfamiliar and alien to the child's experience, the mother - teacher's style of interaction, her face, and her character are not strange. It feels like home. (Sarah L. Lightfoot, Worlds Apart, 1978)

SUGGESTIONS (CONT.)

19. One district has used a school council for each individual building in the district to assess the school's needs, develop a plan to meet the needs, allocate funds, and evaluate the school's progress toward its goals. The council is composed of parents in equal number to the principal, teachers, and other school staff. Twenty-seven parents were on the council. The council was evaluated as having created a positive pressure and a climate for educational improvement. (Citizen Action in Education, 1981, 8 (1))

20. Effective schools get that way partly by making it clear that pupil acquisition of basic school skills takes precedence over all other school activities. There must also be some means for frequently monitoring individual student progress. Principals and teachers need to remain constantly aware of pupil progress in relationship to instructional objectives. (Ronald Edmonds, A Discussion of the Literature and Issues Related to Effective Schooling)